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New York

President:	Mr. Petersen	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Wang Ying fan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Ms. Tan
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan.

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02-30290 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Expression of sympathy concerning earthquake in Afghanistan

The President: On behalf of the Security Council, let me convey our deepest condolences to the Afghan authorities and people following the devastating earthquake in northern Afghanistan. Our thoughts and prayers go to the thousands of Afghan families bereaved and affected by this calamity, in a land which has had far more than its share of suffering in recent years. There can be no doubt that the international community will help the Interim Administration and the local Afghans deal with this tragedy and help the victims, as we are helping the Afghans heal the wounds of war and create lasting peace and development in their country.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Spain, Tajikistan and Turkey, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (the Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan), Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) and Mr. Pamir (Turkey) took seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Council is meeting with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, document S/2002/278.

I should also like to draw attention to the following documents: S/2002/274, which contains a letter date 14 March 2002 from the representative of the United Kingdom transmitting a report on the activities of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and S/2002/283, which contains a joint letter from the representatives of Afghanistan and the Russian Federation transmitting a Joint Russian-Afghan Statement of 12 March 2002.

I welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Louise Fréchette, to this meeting and invite her to take the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I am pleased to be able to address the Security Council on the question of Afghanistan this morning. But it is sad to have to do so on a day when there is yet more bad news from that unhappy country. You have just referred, Sir, to the severe earthquake in the north of the country, which has caused heavy loss of life and thousands of injuries, and left tens of thousands without shelter. The Secretary-General issued a statement this morning expressing his distress at this news, which I am sure we all share.

United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have already sent relief items and assessment teams into the area. A helicopter with people from the United Nations and the International Security Assistance Force is currently surveying the damage. Chairman Karzai and Mr. Nigel Fisher, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, intend to visit the area tomorrow.

I note the large number of non-members of the Council participating in this open meeting, and I am encouraged by the continuing interest and support of the international community in helping the Afghans rebuild their society. Above all, I am pleased to be able to introduce the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan. As you know, in addition to providing an update on recent events, the report also presents the Secretary-General's concept for the future United Nations presence in Afghanistan, for which we will seek the endorsement of the Security Council.

Before addressing the structure of the new mission, I would like to highlight a few developments that have occurred in Afghanistan since the report was issued. As the report was released only last week and as the list of speakers before us is fairly long, I hope to be brief.

The Interim Administration and the United Nations have made education a key priority. The first day of the school year, which was last Saturday, marked a major step in getting children back to school. Chairman Karzai launched a nationwide back-to-school programme at a high school in Kabul, and similar ceremonies took place throughout the country. Carol Bellamy, of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was also in Kabul for the occasion. It is estimated that, around the country, 1.5 million students were able to return to school. As part of the programme, UNICEF organized the delivery of more than 7,000 tons of supplies to 3,000 schools across the country. These will provide primary-school learning materials to more than 1.8 million children, and teaching materials to 51,000 teachers. UNICEF is also working to help restore some of the 2,000 schools that have been damaged or destroyed since 1979. In addition, 500 tents will be provided in areas where there are no schools.

There is other good news, too. Increased rainfall has left many farmers in the west, north and north-east of the country optimistic about the next crop, after three years of drought. There has been a massive increase in land under cultivation. That optimism is reflected in recent population movements. Internally displaced persons have, in some areas, started to return home spontaneously, without waiting for assistance from aid organizations. Similarly, a record number of refugees have benefited from an assisted-return programme organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Interim Administration and the Government of Pakistan. An average of 10,000 refugees a day crossed into Afghanistan from Pakistan between 18 and 22 March. More than 83,000 Afghans have returned since the programme began on 1 March. Six more registration centres will be opened by UNHCR in Pakistan within the next few weeks to cope with this accelerating increase in demand. Preparations are under way for the start of a similar scheme for refugees from Iran, beginning in April.

While we are heartened by this demonstration of popular confidence in Afghanistan's future, we are also concerned about nutritional deficits in some parts of the country. Rapid emergency assessments are being undertaken in areas identified as having high rates of malnutrition. The recent outbreak of scurvy in the Taiwara district of Ghor province, which resulted in 20 deaths, highlights the severity of the malnutrition problem and the need for carefully targeted interventions. The World Food Programme (WFP) will shortly launch a new emergency programme in the most-affected areas. Up to 8.8 million people, including internally displaced persons, will receive food assistance over the next three months. In addition, by December an estimated 1 million schoolchildren will receive food handouts.

And yet, even while United Nations agencies have been gearing up to meet these major challenges — the back-to-school programme, the return of refugees and the continuing malnutrition crisis — they have also become increasingly alarmed by the slow pace of funding. Almost a month ago, at Kabul, we presented the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People for this year, spelling out requirements of $1.18 billion. We now urgently need to convert the generous pledges already made into actual contributions. Otherwise we shall not be able to carry on with the vital activities I have just described.

Turning to the political front, here too we can report significant progress. The first stage of the Loya Jirga process will soon be completed with the public announcement of the rules and procedures for the selection and indirect election of participants in the Loya Jirga and for the convening of the Loya Jirga itself. Those rules have been developed by the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga following a process of

consultation that took place across Afghanistan and at all levels of society.

A budget has been drawn up to cover the complicated organizational and logistical arrangements needed to convene the Loya Jirga. We are extremely grateful for the generous contributions already made by Germany — which has contributed $3 million — and by the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Commission. The Commission's secretariat, with the support of Mr. Brahimi's Office, has designed a public information campaign to inform Afghans throughout the country about the Loya Jirga process. That campaign is in part supported by the Open Media Fund for Afghanistan, which was recently established on the initiative of the well-known journalist and expert on Afghanistan, Mr. Ahmed Rashid. It is perhaps a sign of how things have changed that a man who became famous for his reporting on war and oppression in Afghanistan can now lend his name to the process of democratic change there.

Recent trips by the Loya Jirga Commission to the provinces have confirmed the enormous interest in the Loya Jirga process across the country. In Herat, a meeting hastily convened in the space of two hours was attended by over 1,000 people. When it was discovered that no women were present, another meeting was organized at a girls' school nearby, and was attended by several hundred women. On the other hand, the possibility that the Loya Jirga might be intimidated or corrupted remains a key concern. There are reports that in Herat people have been arrested for speaking out in favour of the Loya Jirga. In other regions people claim that they cannot speak openly about the process for fear of their lives. Addressing those concerns is directly related to the question of security, to which I will now turn.

The security situation across the country as a whole appears to have improved somewhat over the past few weeks. There have, however, been further violent incidents in a few places. In particular, clashes took place between Hazara factions in Daikundi, in the province of Oruzgan. Mr. Brahimi met with representatives of those factions, who then agreed to accept an independent delegation from the Interim Administration to mediate their differences. That mediation process is under way. In Kandahar a grenade was thrown into a crowded bazaar, killing one person and injuring others. Finally, there are reports that Taliban elements are regrouping in southern Paktia for a guerrilla campaign against the Interim Administration and foreign troops. Those incidents remind us how volatile the situation in Afghanistan still is and should warn us not to be complacent. The concerns about security expressed in the Secretary-General's report remain all too pertinent.

I would also like to address the related, and increasingly important, question of the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. A working group composed of the Interim Administration, the United Nations, the International Security Assistance Force and other parties has been established to find solutions to this question. This group, which has already met twice, is preparing proposals that will be considered at a conference on security financing to be held in Geneva on 3 April.

There have been encouraging signs form the Ministry of Defence, commanders and soldiers that many ex-combatants would be interested in reintegration programmes. Work is under way to identify labour-intensive projects and other schemes that can employ former combatants and provide them with an alternative to war. One promising possibility is to train a further 5,000 deminers to help clear the vast number of mines still scattered around the country.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has continued to build on its success in reducing crime and improving security in Kabul. On 19 March, the command of the Kabul multinational brigade was handed over to the German contingent, while the United Kingdom continues to maintain overall command of the ISAF. ISAF is about to complete its training of the 1st Battalion of the Afghan National Guard. The unit will hold a parade on 4 April, and will thereafter assume its new role alongside the existing palace guard.

Preparations for the training of a national Afghan police force are progressing. An advance party of a German training team arrived on 16 March. The six-week basic training course will start in July, when the renovation of the police academy is complete. A public information campaign is under way to attract new recruits. The National Commission on Police Reform has also started its work.

Now I would like to turn to the important issue of human rights. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, four standing working groups were established at the Afghan national workshop on human rights held

in Kabul on 9 March. With the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in particular, those working groups are planning programmes to implement the human rights provisions of the Bonn Agreement, including the establishment of an independent Human Rights Commission, the investigation and monitoring of human rights abuses and the provision of human rights education. The establishment of the Commission is particularly pressing in the light of reports of continuing human rights abuses, such as the attack on ethnic Pashtun civilians in the north of the country, which are described in the Secretary-General's report.

With regard to a related matter, after wide consultations, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has prepared a paper on the Judicial Commission outlining its proposed mission, composition, powers and operating procedures. The paper provides a necessary basis for proceeding with the establishment of that Commission, as required by the Bonn Agreement.

Finally, I should like to say something about the future United Nations mission to Afghanistan, which has been provisionally named the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In his report, the Secretary-General proposes a mission structure supported by two pillars: pillar I for political affairs and pillar II for relief, recovery and reconstruction activities. The proposed structure contains mechanisms for inter-pillar coordination at both the mission headquarters and the regional levels, thus ensuring that political and reconstruction activities support each other rather than run at cross purposes.

A key innovation of UNAMA is the integration of humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction activities within a single pillar. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in charge of pillar II will thus be responsible for direction and oversight of all United Nations relief and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. This integrated configuration will make it easier to work closely with the legitimate Afghan authorities to rebuild Afghanistan in a sustainable way.

Another innovation is the Secretary-General's proposal that the mission have a light expatriate footprint. This is to ensure that Afghans take the lead in the post-conflict recovery phase and that the bulk of foreign aid pledged to Afghanistan actually goes to Afghans.

Human rights will be central to the purposes and functions of the new mission, both as it fulfils the provisions of the Bonn Agreement directly related to human rights and as it seeks to integrate human rights fully into its humanitarian, reconstruction and political activities, including the rule of law and national capacity-building.

A senior human rights coordinator in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will work with staff in both of the mission's main operational pillars and will also coordinate human rights activities under both pillars. The coordinator will serve as the principal contact for the independent Human Rights Commission and will liaise with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations human rights mechanisms. Staff, including Afghan nationals, will be equipped to perform the human rights aspects of their work, including the integration of rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches, in the Mission's relief and reconstruction activities.

With regard to policing, Germany has taken the lead in this sector and has initiated a number of significant projects related to police reform. It has dispatched a highly experienced team of police advisers to Kabul to undertake this work. Germany has made clear, however, that assistance will also be required from other donors and international organizations. The two meetings convened in Berlin over the past two months on the subject of policing were aimed at securing such commitments.

In order to support German efforts in Afghanistan and to ensure that UNAMA has adequate resources to coordinate closely with the German team, the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as well as to provide advice to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General has recommended that three police advisers be added to the mission. Both Germany and the Ministry of Interior have welcomed that recommendation.

The new mission in Afghanistan will face extremely complex challenges. I believe that the Secretary-General's proposals, developed in close consultation with Mr. Brahimi and his team, are an imaginative and constructive response to the

operational challenges on the ground. I look forward to the Council's discussion of those proposals, and I very much hope that the Council will endorse them.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Welcome to New York, Mr. Minister. It is a privilege for us that this meeting is taking place under your presidency.

First of all, I should like to convey the condolences and solidarity of the French people to the Afghan people, struck once again by a cruel ordeal: the earthquake that has just destroyed an entire region in the north of the country and claimed thousands of victims.

The representative of Spain will be making a statement on behalf of the entire European Union, and France subscribes fully to it. Therefore, I shall limit my statement to a few comments.

This meeting is taking a first look at the record six months after the beginning of the military intervention by the coalition, three months after the Interim Administration began to function and three months before the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

That record, which Louise Fréchette has just described in eloquent detail, is clearly positive. The ground covered over the past six months is impressive. The fight against terrorism has been marked by several decisive elements and is being pursued vigorously and relentlessly. The United States and its allies, including France, are tracking down Al Qaeda elements day by day.

The political transition is also progressing. The Afghan people is regaining control of its destiny. The Emergency Loya Jirga, scheduled for June, will be a new step towards the creation of a multi-ethnic, representative and democratic Government. The responsible conduct of the transitional authorities has made it possible largely to avoid repeating past errors, such as the ordeals in 1992 in Kabul or in 1997 in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Finally, the reconstruction of Afghanistan has now begun with the assistance of the entire international community, illustrated by the pledges made in Tokyo. Throughout the country there are signs of this true rebirth. The most moving example, referred to by Louise Fréchette, is undoubtedly the beginning of the school year: last Saturday, a million and a half children of both sexes literally rushed to their schools and to knowledge. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, who was in Kabul at the time, shared this moment of hope by visiting the two schools rebuilt by France — the Esteqlal high school for boys and the Malalai high school for girls.

The success of the reconstruction now depends in part on good coordination between bilateral and multilateral donors, organized in the Afghan Support Group and the Implementation Group, or through the United Nations system. Locally, one person, in our view, should provide this indispensable coordination: Lakhdar Brahimi.

In New York too, impressive ground has been covered in only six months. A series of resolutions were adopted, at a sustained pace on the principles for a settlement — resolution 1378 (2001); the endorsement of the Bonn Agreement — resolution 1383 (2001); the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) — resolution 1386 (2001); and, finally, the creation of a de-territorialized regime against Al Qaeda to replace the sanctions against Afghanistan — resolution 1390 (2002).

A new draft resolution is now being prepared. It will allow for the rapid implementation of the excellent recommendations of the Secretary-General, as described to us by Louise Fréchette. It will give structure and a unified form to the United Nations presence, which has developed, with impressive effectiveness, under the authority of Lakhdar Brahimi. France is working on this draft, which will be submitted to the Council tomorrow during our consultations.

The issue of security remains a more difficult one. Agreement is emerging on the extension of ISAF beyond the time frame set out in resolution 1386 (2001) — that is, 20 June. Together we will have to decide on the right time to announce it and also on the right time frame.

Regarding the geographic expansion of the Force beyond Kabul and its vicinity, the position of the major contributors is clear: they are not in favour of it. Indeed, a force spread out beyond Kabul and its environs would have to be involved in settling conflicts falling under the purview of Afghan authority.

Absolute priority, then, must be given to the training of a unified Afghan police force and army. We must create an army that is free from ethnic and

regional divisions and from the influence of political parties and warlords. We must also use all available instruments to help in achieving security and law and order in the provinces. The economic lever should then be used with determination. Assistance in reconstruction cannot be brought to provinces where local authorities commit massive violations of human rights or maintain a climate of insecurity. On the other hand, of course, humanitarian assistance should not be made conditional.

France will participate fully in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It has already entered into specific commitments with regard to health care, education, agriculture, administration, the preservation of its patrimony, training of the future Afghan army and police, as well as assistance in combating drugs.

The fulfilment of these commitments has been the subject of in-depth discussions with the Afghan authorities, first of all during the visit of President Hamid Karzai to Paris on 28 February, and, quite recently, last Sunday, when Mr. Hubert Védrine went to Kabul.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. Minister, your presence at this meeting honours us and also attests to your country's commitment to the subject that we are considering today.

May I begin by expressing our solidarity with the Afghan people in these painful times as a result of the severe earthquake. We would request the Ambassador to pass on our sincerest condolences.

We are grateful for the presentation made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, and for the report of the Secretary-General, which emphasizes the historical complexities of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as the shape of the challenges to be confronted by the United Nations in the months and years to come.

We agree with the Secretary-General that security is, one the one hand, a vital prerequisite for safeguarding the peace process in Afghanistan and that it is also, on the other hand, the first issue to be addressed in the context of the reconstruction of that country, as is indicated in the relevant paragraphs of the report, including paragraphs 45 and 126. This is the most important need of the Afghan people at the present time, and the Security Council, through its actions, must contribute to meeting it.

Indeed, without security, the Interim Administration will not be able to fulfil its functions adequately throughout the territory. Without security, the legitimacy of the outcome of the Loya Jirga will be called into question. Without security, the United Nations presence will face difficulties, and, without security, it will be virtually impossible to provide humanitarian assistance.

Colombia therefore expresses its resolute support for expanding the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) beyond Kabul. As paragraph 59 of the report emphasizes, "the main threats to the Interim Administration emanate from the provinces".

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to invite those countries that lead the Force or are members of it to explore mechanisms to respond to this appeal from the Afghan people. We have taken note of the reservations expressed thus far in this connection.

This could be the best way to begin to respond to the risks and the threats that are mentioned in paragraph 123 of the report of the Secretary-General. In the face of these risks, it is necessary to strengthen security measures in order to meet short-, medium- and long-term needs and to make it possible for Afghanistan to be a viable country from an economic and political standpoint.

In this respect, I wish to emphasize the report's assertion that:

> "The only way to ensure the eradication of terrorism from Afghan soil is by empowering the country's legitimate authorities to police their own territory." *(S/2002/278, para. 123)*

In addition, on the subject of security, we must always bear in mind the military operation that has been under way for six months now, fighting against Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, and realize that, as things stand now, there is a need for careful coordination with the activities of ISAF if it is expanded to the remainder of Afghanistan.

We would like to refer to some specific points of importance to our delegation.

First, let me express our deep satisfaction at the return to school, on 23 March, of boys and girls. We welcome the actions of the Interim Administration that

made it possible to fulfil this objective, and, in doing so, we extend our appreciation to all of those who facilitated that return, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Secondly, we wish to refer to the financial situation of the Interim Administration, because we believe this to be a subject that deserves our consideration. We are referring to the delays and the difficulties in channelling those resources that were pledged during the Tokyo Conference - problems that could paralyse the Administration and jeopardize the credibility of the emerging institutions in Afghanistan. We trust that these delays and difficulties do not reflect a lack of commitment on the part of the international community.

Thirdly, a comment on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Colombia supports the proposed structure that has been submitted to us for consideration, and we are prepared to support a concise Security Council draft resolution endorsing this concept. As Ambassador Levitte has informed us, the draft resolution has already been prepared. We wish to emphasize nevertheless that UNAMA is an integrated mechanism that will have to coordinate many agencies and programmes free of any subordinate relationship. That will not necessarily be easy.

If in the future we achieve a real process of cooperation among the various intergovernmental organs of the United Nations, we may be able to produce decisions that make the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General easier. There is clearly a role for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, which we must identify and relate to the decisions that the Security Council will be taking on that structure.

Little time has elapsed since the establishment of the Interim Administration in December 2001. Nonetheless, in this brief period fundamental changes have occurred in Afghanistan's political structure that are encouraging. The report indicates the frankly overwhelming magnitude of the tasks ahead. That is why we believe it timely to revive the initiative of conducting a comprehensive assessment of the situation in that country. We feel that such a comprehensive assessment will be the best starting point for the new United Nations mission in Afghanistan. We should perhaps initiate that exercise some time in July. It should put the international community's role in a clear perspective and help the Security Council itself fully to grasp the most complex challenge that the United Nations faces in that region, which is particularly critical to international peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): I, too, wish to welcome you, Sir, to New York. Your presence here with us today is most welcome and signifies your country's commitment to Afghanistan. I want to completely associate the United States with your message of condolence and sympathy to the Afghan people in the aftermath of the earthquake today.

I also want to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her comprehensive overview of where we stand now. I think it is a very useful outline.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan and the proposal for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We look forward to hearing other nations' views on UNAMA and to discussing it more fully in the coming days. For now, I want to second the Secretary-General's comment that what Ambassador Brahimi, his colleagues, the United Nations and, indeed, the international community have accomplished thus far is truly remarkable under the circumstances. We support the Secretary-General's intent to get an effective, efficient and integrated mission fully in place as soon as possible with a light expatriate footprint and heavy reliance on the Afghans themselves.

Today, I want to say a word about security. We all recognize that there is a variety of security challenges in Afghanistan today. The Afghans are addressing these challenges and the United States, together with others, is assisting them to do so in a number of ways. We will continue the campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Working with our international partners in the coming weeks, we will begin training a national army and the United States will contribute significantly to the training and equipping of police. In early April, we intend to meet with other interested countries to discuss efforts to improve the security situation in Afghanistan.

When the current mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) comes up for renewal, we will support its extension through December of this year. We will also provide assistance to Turkey should it, as we hope, agree to take over ISAF command from the United Kingdom. The United States is working, through its special forces and civil affairs teams, with local Afghan commanders and these teams will continue to help local commanders deal with contentious issues and to discourage conflict among them. We believe that these efforts are responsive to Afghanistan's needs and are already having a very positive impact.

Given the present security situation and the range and variety of assistance already available or under way, we do not currently see the need to expand ISAF's areas of activity beyond Kabul and its immediate environs. We remain extremely appreciative of the United Kingdom's leadership of the International Security Assistance Force and express our thanks for the support of the other troop-contributing nations.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are honoured and pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting to discuss issues relating to a great people and its country. This demonstrates your interest in and concern for Afghanistan, just as you have shown your interest in and concern for African affairs.

Allow me to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan. We also wish to thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her briefing on developments in that country. We believe that the report provides the Council with an important opportunity to assess and to discuss ways of improving the situation in Afghanistan, which has suffered more than 23 years of domestic and external conflicts and their consequences, affecting all aspects of life in that country. Any assessment and discussion of the United Nations role in this area require us to address the various issues with great patience and specificity, given the sensitivity of the situation.

We wish to express our satisfaction with the information contained in the report on the status of implementation of the Bonn Agreement and the establishment of the Afghan Interim Administration and its key commissions, which have had important political results. Notwithstanding the emergence of these embryonic political institutions in a turbulent political atmosphere, we believe that they have been tested and made significant strides in various aspects of national life, including education, the fight against illicit drugs, the participation of women and the convening of the Loya Jirga, which represents the core of the political process. Its success will dispel the threat of another war looming over that unhappy country.

With respect to Afghanistan, which has suffered for so long, I wish to associate myself with previous speakers in expressing our deep sorrow for the victims of the earthquakes in the northern regions of that country. On behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, I convey our sincere condolences to the people and Government of friendly Afghanistan for the catastrophe and for their losses. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and other relevant entities that have hastened to provide assistance to all the victims of the earthquake.

Security and stability in that country continue to be of major concern. Without the establishment of security, neither the peace process nor economic development and reconstruction can go forward. In this regard, we share the Secretary-General's concern over the ongoing instability of the security situation in many parts of Afghanistan, particularly outside major cities. This instability is caused by the persistence of pockets of Taliban and Al Qaeda resistance and by the continuing confrontation between political and military rivals.

We would like to express our regret that these confrontations have reached a level of ethnic violence between and among the different parties. The report notes many serious attacks on and violations of human rights based on ethnic motives. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation on making all efforts as soon as possible with the different Afghani leaders and their hesitant partners to participate in the political process. We also support his recommendations on training and equipping an Afghani security force under the Interim Administration, making all international efforts to set to rights the security situation currently dividing the various Afghani parties, and on deploying the Afghani security force efficiently and as soon as possible.

In this regard, we would like to note the wish of the Interim Administration and the Afghani people to expand the area of work of the International Security Assistance Force — ISAF — because of the sense of security achieved in the region. We believe that the Council should consider this issue seriously and give it the importance it deserves.

At the same time, we believe that a national army should be established as soon as possible, an army not based on ethnic criteria or any other affiliations. It should bear the responsibility for security of every part of Afghanistan, as prescribed by the Bonn Agreement. It should also be provided with all the logistical support it requires, because this is the least that we can give the Afghani people — international assistance that would enhance stability.

The report makes clear the importance of the continuation of humanitarian assistance and of proper coordination among various humanitarian agencies and institutions. Deep concern has been raised by the drought that has struck many areas, in addition to the disaster last night, and by the blocked roads in mountainous areas of Afghanistan, thus threatening great loss of life and requiring immediate measures to prevent such a catastrophe.

We express our great satisfaction with the pioneer girl students going back to school, raising hopes for a future of stability and normality.

We also express concern with regard to the information in the Secretary-General's report on poppy cultivation in the eastern and southern areas of Afghanistan in spite of the Interim Administration's efforts and issuance of an edict prohibiting the cultivation, production, processing or use of illicit drugs. They require international financial assistance that would dissuade different Afghani groups from considering illicit drugs as a major source of income. Of course, dealing with this issue requires a long time.

We support the information in the report on Afghanistan's need for enormous international financial assistance in the near future in order to meet current humanitarian needs and to begin the process of economic recovery.

The report states that current United Nations deployment in Afghanistan is not commensurate with the level of effort required and the role to be played in this game of the nation's future. Therefore, the proposal to erect a new structure of the United Nations presence in Afghanistan comes within the proper time frame and represents an urgent need for the Organization to play its role and to coordinate all of its efforts.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team for their arduous efforts in performing their difficult mandate. We hope that the composition of the new mission, as described by Ms. Fréchette, and in the manner presented by Ambassador Levitte, represents new hope towards strengthening all of Ambassador Brahimi's efforts and those of his team in Afghanistan. We believe that the Secretary-General's appointment of two very competent personalities to be Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the fact that each chairs one of the two major components — political affairs, and relief, recovery and reconstruction — are very encouraging and raise hope that this mission will be able to coordinate among the various agencies and to carry out its mandate under Ambassador Brahimi's leadership in the best possible way.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

Ms. Tan (Singapore): At the outset, let me thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for introducing the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Afghanistan, which is both informative and comprehensive.

Singapore is in full agreement with most of the points made in the report. A recurring motive in the Secretary-General's report is for Afghan priorities to lead the international community's efforts, and this should maximize the use of Afghan capacity. Indeed, Afghan voices should constantly guide our work here in the Council. However, it is imperative that all Afghans also work cohesively together and transcend ethnic and regional parochialism.

The international community has a unique opportunity to make good in Afghanistan. Similarly, Afghanistan has a singular chance to make the most of the international community's focused attention on it. Neither should squander the prospect.

It is also timely and appropriate for the Norwegian presidency to convene today's open debate to review developments in Afghanistan four months since the last such debate and three months since the inauguration of the Afghan Interim Authority and establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

We join others in expressing our condolences to the Afghan authorities and people for the thousands feared dead after a series of earthquakes struck northern Afghanistan last night and earlier today and in appealing for urgent humanitarian and other assistance to be extended.

Given the global interest in Afghanistan, it is especially important for Council members to listen regularly to the views of non-Council members, especially members of the "six plus two" group, which now meets in Kabul and includes Afghanistan and other key players, as we deliberate on the next steps, including the draft resolution referred to by France. The presence of the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Chair of the Afghan Support Group, will also provide an important dimension to the Council's work.

The Security Council has been intimately involved in developments in Afghanistan for many years. More recently, the Council has closely monitored and given the added push and support whenever necessary to affirm the United Nations central role in supporting the Afghan people's efforts in reinstating Afghanistan into the community of nations. The Council stands ready, as it declared in resolution 1383 (2001), to support the interim institutions established by the Bonn Agreement, as well as to support the implementation of the Agreement itself.

Singapore therefore looks forward to participating in the Council's discussion to establish the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: a lean, unified and integrated United Nations structure, designed to support the various processes outlined in the Bonn Agreement.

It is clear from the participation in this open debate, and from the various complementary tracks — including the Tokyo donor's conference, which made an important contribution to securing the political process — that the Security Council is but one forum involved in the development of a global consensus on a coherent and comprehensive long-term strategy to bring peace to Afghanistan. Nonetheless, because of its responsibility under the Charter and its operational capability, the Security Council is perhaps best equipped to harness the collective and sustained political will to address the underlying causes and dynamics of the conflict in Afghanistan and to help the country's transition from war to peace. This, of course, does not preclude the Security Council from collaborating closely with all relevant partners to develop complementarity in our common endeavour.

With the help of the United Nations and the rest of the international community, Afghanistan has made huge strides in the right direction in many areas. The first stage of the three-step Bonn process has made headway in generating both domestic and international legitimacy for the Afghan Interim Authority. There is a growing sense of security in Kabul. The worst of the humanitarian crisis has been averted. There is a steady stream of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries and internally displaced persons returning home. Nascent institutions have been re-established. Singapore has pledged, in addition to humanitarian assistance, a special five-year technical assistance package to train Afghans to help the most vulnerable groups in society, in particular women and children. However, despite progress in all of these areas, there is, as the Secretary-General noted, no room for complacency. Simple events that would be taken for granted in most parts of the world, such as Afghans celebrating the new year on 21 March and 1.5 million Afghan children returning to school last Saturday, hit the headlines and made front-page news precisely because of the depths to which Afghanistan had sunk.

Tensions bubble beneath the surface and constantly threaten to reverse the fragile and tentative progress that has been made. As we have learned from so many conflicts around the world, in order to be sustainable, any political or peace process must adopt a comprehensive and coherent approach. This is something that Singapore has long advocated, and it is an issue to which Colombia also referred.

Elements of progress on the political, humanitarian, reconstruction and security tracks are mutually reinforcing. While it is not necessary for progress on all of these tracks to proceed at the same pace, a critical lag on one of them could seriously jeopardize the entire process. In this regard, an urgent and pressing issue, which the Secretary-General has brought to our attention, is the security situation. We are grateful to the United Kingdom for its leadership in

establishing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as well as for the contribution of all the troop-contributing countries, which has brought a degree of calm to Kabul. ISAF has provided a crucial anchor, allowing the Afghan Interim Authority to extend its influence, especially to the provinces and outlying regions. However, while security and neutrality are being maintained in Kabul, there have been worrying reports of instability in other parts of Afghanistan, especially in the crucial period leading up to the emergency Loya Jirga.

As the recent activities of the international coalition demonstrate, Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters remaining in Afghanistan continue to pose a threat to the peace process. Important efforts have been made to establish an Afghan national army and police force. However, stopgap measures might be needed in the interim before both are brought to effective capacity. The Security Council should therefore examine all the instruments in its toolbox of actions to address this important question. Calibrating international assistance could be a powerful incentive for good behaviour. However, carrots must always be backed up by strong sticks. The Security Council must carefully examine how best to avoid any major armed conflict and provide security for the main transportation and trade routes.

Even as the international community's attention is focused on Afghanistan, we should not forget the interlinkages with the wider region. The generous rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts directed at Afghanistan should therefore have a regional focus, and should generate peace dividends for Afghanistan's neighbours, so that a vested interest in Afghanistan's stability can be developed. Similarly, it is important to remember that Afghanistan is but one of the many trouble spots in the world deserving of the world's attention and involvement. The big lesson of Afghanistan is that the fate of a distant country can have a global and catastrophic impact. The United Nations and the international community at large must therefore not repeat the mistakes of the past, but stay the course in their efforts in Afghanistan and elsewhere for the long term.

The President: I thank the representative of Singapore for the kind words she addressed to me.

Mr. Aguilar Zínser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like, first of all, to express my Government's condolences in connection with the loss of life and the other consequences of today's earthquake, which struck the Baghlan region of Afghanistan, in particular the city of Nahrin.

I would like to express my Government's satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, presiding over this meeting of the Security Council. Not only does your presence bear witness to your interest in the situation in Afghanistan, but it is a clear demonstration of the serious approach and sense of responsibility of your Government in participating in the work of the Security Council.

My Government would also like to associate itself with the satisfaction expressed by other members of the Council about the progress that has been made in recent months in the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, and we commend all of those who have participated actively in that endeavour.

My Government believes, however, that the message delivered by Ms. Louise Fréchette contained a warning that we must heed. This is no time for complacency, because the task ahead of the international community and, in particular, the task that lies ahead for the Afghan people, is extremely difficult and complex. In this regard, two basic criteria must be taken into account. The first is that the efforts of the international community must be sustained. Past experience in the case of Afghanistan shows that any loss of sustained effort can give rise to a new cycle of problems, which the international community afterwards bemoans. The Security Council must thus ensure that the reconstruction effort under way in Afghanistan represents a commitment that must be fulfilled — an effort that will involve tasks being accomplished over time in a sustained fashion.

Secondly, my country believes that the task of reconstructing Afghanistan is fundamentally one of coordination among all international efforts by all the nations and organizations that have expressed their readiness to become involved. In this connection, we fully agree with the comments made earlier by Ms. Fréchette in identifying four major challenges that must immediately be met in a coordinated and concerted way. The first is, undoubtedly, the political integration of Afghanistan through the Loya Jirga process. We believe this to be the most vital task, on which the success of all the other tasks depends. Nothing can replace the will of the Afghan people

themselves in the reconstruction of their country, and nothing can help them to express their will better than a Government in which everyone can participate — a representative Government with the capacity to ensure that the rule of law prevails throughout Afghan territory.

Undoubtedly, the second topic, which other members of the Council have already referred to, is security in the country. The immediate task is to combine activities to demobilize combatants, form a new Afghan military force that represents the national interests, and form a national police whose peace-building efforts, my country wishes to emphasize, should have as one goal the eradication of the production and trafficking of narcotics. The production of drugs greatly underlies much of the violence and the sources of power in the interior of Afghanistan, and we must make an effort not to lose sight of the issue of combating the production and trafficking of narcotics in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, we believe that it is essential to pay due attention to humanitarian issues and not sidestep them. Giving appropriate attention to refugees and displaced persons will be a prerequisite for the stabilization of the country and the advancement of the Loya Jirga political process. It is fundamental that the Afghans recover control over their own communities and that they rebuild those communities in peace and achieve reconstruction on that basis. This must be done with full respect for human rights, promoting civil rights and freedoms in Afghanistan, including the equality of women, which is a very important element. We believe that many difficulties lie ahead in the achievement of these goals, and unfortunately there will be many causes of frustration in the future.

Finally, we believe that all these measures must also be part of great sustained efforts at economic and social development through the appropriate use of resources and the creation of national capacities in order to make proper use of these resources.

All of these are fundamental tasks that are, above all, in the hands of the Afghans themselves. I emphasize that the international community cannot in any way replace the will and the commitment of the Afghan people regarding their own political process and the reconstruction of their country. It is up to the international community to motivate, support and lend coherence and content to the efforts of the Afghan people.

In this regard, the United Nations Mission — for which a concrete proposal has already been made to us by the Secretariat, to be reflected in a resolution that, as the Ambassador of France has pointed out, is now being prepared — must be designed with a very clear idea of combining efforts and producing a real model partnership among all the many agencies of the United Nations system that are participating in the task of reconstructing Afghanistan, so that in the short term their work can be made more effective. That Mission must also be inspired by the capacity and the skill of the international community to transfer, as soon as possible, all the development responsibilities to the Afghan institutions that emerge as part of the economic and social consolidation process. We hope that the resolution being drafted will adequately reflect the mandate for achieving these objectives.

May I conclude by emphasizing once again that the reconstruction of Afghanistan will not be at all easy. The present momentum augurs well. The Security Council, therefore, must see to it that that momentum is maintained.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My delegation welcomes your presence today, Sir, and we thank you for presiding over today's meeting. Our thanks also go to Ms. Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General, for her briefing and her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General.

Like other delegations, my delegation would like to express its condolences to and solidarity with the Afghan people, who have suffered great losses from the earthquake.

In his report, the Secretary-General gives a full analysis of the present situation in Afghanistan, and we agree with that analysis. Since the signing of the Bonn Agreement, the political process in that country has gained headway, and there have been some important changes in Afghan society. The Interim Administration has made some important decisions and decrees since its inauguration. The Special Independent Commission is making is making preparations for the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga. As a new school year has begun, a large number of school dropouts — including

girls, who for the first time in six years are able to receive education — are going back to school. The situation of women has been improved.

Through cooperation with United Nations agencies, the Governments concerned and relevant non-governmental organizations, Afghanistan is setting the stage for resuming agricultural activities and starting economic reconstruction. It is improving its relations with its neighbours. We congratulate the country on the hard-won achievements that it has made within a short period of time. The relevant agencies of the United Nations system, and especially the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team, have all made important contributions to achieving progress in Afghanistan. We would like to express our great appreciation to Mr. Brahimi and his team for their effective efforts in difficult conditions for peace and economic reconstruction in the country.

On the other hand, the overall situation, especially the state of security in the country, remains rather fragile. The eradication of the Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants, the promotion of reconciliation and confidence among different ethnic groups and putting an end to the partition and military conflicts among warlords and armed groups are all difficult challenges facing the country. Especially with the coming of the Loya Jirga, people are worried about the possible outbreak of new conflicts triggered by the distribution of power.

The Secretary-General's report contains a thorough analysis of the security situation. He has also produced pertinent recommendations and observations. We support those recommendations, including the extension of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and its appropriate expansion.

In his report, the Secretary-General focuses on the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and he details his ideas about its mandate and structure. We believe that given the current circumstances, it is necessary and timely to establish such an integrated and unified structure, which will synchronize the various assistance initiatives of the United Nations, so that together these combined initiatives will lend stronger support for the peace process of Afghanistan. We support the establishment of UNAMA and hope that the Security Council will adopt a resolution on this, so that the Assistance Mission can be established and put into operation in a timely fashion.

As a neighbour of Afghanistan, China has always been committed to the full settlement of the Afghan question, and we actively support the Bonn process. Since the establishment of the Interim Administration, China has reopened its embassy in Kabul and has provided emergency assistance. Our assistance in cash has been disbursed, and the first shipment of material assistance, which mainly consists of badly needed medical equipment and school supplies, has arrived in Kabul.

The Chinese Government is working in coordination with the Interim Administration and with Germany on the training of the Afghan police force. China has signed an agreement with the Afghan authorities to provide 20,000 police uniforms, 50,000 pair of military boots and other clothing. A comprehensive assistance team assembled from more than 10 departments in China has arrived in Kabul; it will coordinate with its Afghan counterparts on reconstruction assistance, and on the building of hospitals. We are willing to work with other concerned countries to make our own contribution towards the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The President: I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by expressing Cameroon's most sincere condolences to the Afghan people on the earthquake that has devastated the country, claiming numerous victims.

My country also welcomes your presence among us, Mr. Minister, which clearly illustrates the importance that your country and the international community attach to the situation in Afghanistan. I thank Ms. Louise Fréchette for her comprehensive briefing, and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2002/278).

My delegation welcomes the positive developments in the political situation in Afghanistan, in particular the gradual implementation of the Bonn Agreement. The Interim Authority, established on 22 December 2001, has begun its work and has drafted a road map for the development of Afghanistan. It has also set up the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, whose work

is already well under way. The Interim Administration has also begun to establish other institutions provided for under the Bonn Agreement: the Civil Service, Judicial and Human Rights Commissions. In that regard, we welcome the organization of a national workshop on human rights at Kabul on 9 March 2002, in which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated.

In spite of the praiseworthy progress made, the fact remains that the security situation continues to be a major source of concern. The existence of the vestiges of Taliban and terrorist forces, clashes between political and military factions, inter-clan and inter-ethnic violence and banditry all make the situation outside Kabul unstable and precarious. We welcome the positive role played in Afghanistan by the International Security Assistance Force. We support its expansion to other major urban centres, as recommended by the Secretary-General in paragraph 126 of his report, in order to reduce the chances of an outbreak of hostilities among armed factions. We also agree with the Secretary-General's view on the need to give priority to the creation of an effective Afghan security force and a genuinely multi-ethnic and apolitical Afghan army.

The humanitarian situation also continues to be very worrisome, and has worsened with the recent earthquake. We welcome the praiseworthy efforts that have been made in this regard by United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations and various countries. We call on donor countries to resolutely support the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People, which includes projects aimed at responding to urgent humanitarian needs and addresses the country's rehabilitation and reconstruction.

My delegation supports the comments and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on the creation of a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which would be based on two pillars, namely, political affairs on the one hand and relief, recovery and reconstruction on the other. We believe the mission will play a very important role, especially in ensuring coordination and consistency among various activities. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be included as needed in the establishment of this structure.

My delegation would also like to pay tribute to the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, Ambassador Brahimi, as well as to the entire United Nations team in the field.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I thank you for honouring us with your presence here today, Mr. Minister, to preside over the Security Council.

I too wish to extend to the Afghan people the condolences of the people of Bulgaria over the loss of human life caused by the earthquake in the north-eastern part of the country.

I thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2002/278). I also thank Ms. Fréchette for introducing the report, and for giving us additional useful information.

Bulgaria fully supports the statement soon to be made by Spain on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore confine myself to a few brief comments in my national capacity.

If the Afghan people's prospects are brighter today — something that was not expected only six months ago — it is due in large part to the efforts, determination and courage of the anti-terrorist coalition led by the United States. The struggle against terrorism, in which Bulgaria is proud to participate, continues today. Its success will also determine the success of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The United Nations has a full role to play in those efforts, and we are very grateful to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team, for the remarkable work they have accomplished thus far.

I would like, at the outset, to say that my country fully supports the Secretary-General's approach to the structure of a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and in particular his intention to rely on the talents of the Afghan people for the work of the mission.

We share the view that the question of security remains of primary importance for the recovery of Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance

Force (ISAF), which includes a Bulgarian contingent, plays a key role in that regard. We believe that it would be appropriate for ISAF's mandate to be extended after the initial six months. I take this opportunity to thank the United Kingdom once again for its effective leadership of ISAF. The extension of ISAF's mandate would be an expression of the international community's commitment to the Afghan people. In our view, a careful approach is necessary with regard to ISAF's territorial expansion beyond Kabul. Such expansion must take place in tandem with the process of establishing an Afghan national army and police force.

Bulgaria welcomes the progress made in the area of human rights in Afghanistan. Among the events organized in Kabul in March, we should like to note the commemoration of International Women's Day and the first national workshop on human rights. It must be pointed out, however, that disturbing information has been reported concerning acts of ethnic intolerance and repression that require increased vigilance on the part of the international community.

We share the opinion of the Secretary-General, expressed in his 28 February letter to Member States, concerning the urgent need to deliver humanitarian aid, which has been made even more important by yesterday's earthquake. In response to the appeal launched, Bulgaria has done its best to speed the humanitarian assistance that we pledged at the Tokyo donor Conference in January.

The fight against drug trafficking is of major importance for the future of Afghanistan. The eradication of illicit drugs requires a coherent programme that ensures the participation of the rural population. My country is directly affected by that traffic, because it lies directly on the path of illicit drugs that flow from Afghanistan to users in Europe and elsewhere.

Plans for recovery in Afghanistan require optimal balance and coordination among the various forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. My country is mobilizing its own potential in order to participate actively in Afghanistan's recovery.

The President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Welcome to New York and to the Security Council, Mr. Foreign Minister. Your presence here, and that of the Deputy Secretary-General, who briefed us earlier this morning, are ample testimony to Afghanistan's importance for the United Nations. I hope your presence and your conduct of this meeting will help get that message out. We in the British Mission are hearing it with particular immediacy, as a member of our staff is currently serving on temporary duty at the British Embassy in Kabul.

I will be as brief as I can, not least because, as Ambassador Tafrov has said, the representative of Spain will be speaking later in the debate on behalf of the European Union; I associate myself entirely with that statement.

At the outset, I should like to associate myself with all those who have expressed condolences to the Interim Administration of Afghanistan and to the Afghan people at the earthquake which has occurred in the north of the country. As the Deputy Secretary-General said, the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was asked by the Interim Administration to assist and was authorized earlier today to deploy a team to the disaster area. The team includes representatives of ISAF and of the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as representatives of the United Kingdom Department for International Development. They deployed by helicopter and are currently expected to report back to donors and agencies at another meeting in Kabul this evening. A follow-up donors' coordination meeting will take place tomorrow morning. Meanwhile, ISAF is assisting the United Nations Development Programme in establishing an operations room in Kabul.

We very much welcome the Secretary-General's report on Afghanistan (S/2002/278). It is very clear to us that the Special Representative and his colleagues have achieved a very great deal in a short space of time. We will certainly work with the French delegation to ensure that the draft resolution that they are preparing is adopted quickly and expeditiously.

The formal establishment of a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will be a crucial element of support for the Bonn process, and we very much welcome the unified, integrated structure that is envisaged. It is important that the political and reconstruction efforts of the United Nations be closely coordinated, for, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, good reconstruction helps political stability.

UNAMA should also aim to increase Afghan capacity and should pursue a human-rights-oriented and gender-sensitive approach. It is also important, as others have said, that we not lose sight of the fact that there is still a major humanitarian problem in Afghanistan. Much will still depend on the efforts of local Afghan staff, and we very much agree with the Secretary-General that what they have done in distributing aid thus far has been heroic. Fast and effective delivery of aid is essential in giving the Interim Administration the support it needs.

We also welcome the profile that the Secretary-General has given to the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance. For some time, the United Kingdom has been a strong supporter of the mine action effort in Afghanistan, both in terms of finance and otherwise. Mine action is sometimes overlooked in dealing with the various crises on the Council's agenda, as our intervention in the 15 March debate on the protection of civilians made clear. We anticipate seeing forward planning to deal with the landmines problem taking place within the wider framework of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Appropriate sequencing and prioritization of mine clearance activities will be important points in that respect.

We also hope that the Council's deliberations on the protection of civilians are very much borne in mind as UNAMA is established. Here, I would like to point to the importance, relevance and usefulness of the aide-memoire and presidential statement adopted by the Council on that occasion as we plan future work on Afghanistan. It is very important that the protection of civilians be mainstreamed into the activities of the Secretariat and of the Council.

We would also be interested to hear whether the Secretary-General foresees a role in Afghanistan for the internally displaced persons unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), since there is very obviously a major problem with regard to internally displaced persons. It would be very helpful if Assistant Secretary-General Türk were able to give us some indication of the Secretariat's thinking on that issue as he wraps up the debate.

It is also clear that the role of donor groups, such as the Afghan Support Group, will remain very important as the Council takes forward its work on Afghanistan. We need to ensure that the work of the Afghan Support Group can inform and strengthen the emerging coordination and integration of structures in UNAMA.

On the political side, it is essential that the Emergency Loya Jirga be successful, with agreement on a more representative Transitional Administration as part of the Bonn process. We very much welcome the support that the United Nations has given to the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga. That effort deserves wider international support and recognition.

Security has, quite rightly, been a major issue in the discussion thus far. ISAF has helped to maintain security in and around Kabul. I am sure it is the sense of all Council members that its mandate should be extended beyond June, and I would like to send that clear political message now. We also accept the importance of spreading the ISAF effect outside Kabul, although, as Ambassador Levitte and others have made clear, expansion of the Force's area of operation looks difficult. It is clear that the future stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and the return of refugees, will depend on adequate security, so we will need to give careful consideration to how the ISAF effect might be encouraged to take root throughout the country.

Training of the Afghan police and army will be an essential element of this, and we need to help the Afghan authorities with the development of their own structures. The focus needs to be on security sector reform, and we very much welcome the meeting of interested donors next month, to which Ambassador Cunningham and others have referred.

Finally, I should like to mention the problem of narcotics, as Ambassador Wehbe and Ambassador Aguilar Zínser have done before me. There is an urgent need to tackle this problem. Recent announcements by the Interim Administration have been a very positive start. But the opium harvest begins next month. The international community should provide financial and political support to ensure that the poppy crop is destroyed and that the product does not find its way onto the international drugs market. This is a vital issue for all of us, and I make no apology for leaving the Council with that final thought.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): May I thank you, Mr. Minister, for presiding over our deliberations today at this public meeting of the Council on Afghanistan. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her comprehensive briefing.

The Government and the people of Ireland are deeply saddened at reports this morning of another devastating earthquake in northern Afghanistan. We extend our condolences to the Afghan authorities and people. We greatly appreciate the tremendous efforts being made by relief agencies to provide rapid assistance in the affected area.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Afghanistan, as the Secretary-General says in his report before the Council, is a shattered society. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of its people desperately want peace, security and a new beginning.

It is a notable feature of the Secretary-General's assessment of the challenges now facing Afghanistan that no effort is made to portray the situation as other than it is: real promise matched by real opportunities, but also accompanied by formidable and daunting challenges for all of us — the people of Afghanistan, the United Nations, the entire international community.

For this honesty and clarity of focus, Ireland is deeply grateful to the Secretary-General and to Special Representative Brahimi.

It may occasionally be possible to lose sight of the magnitude of the United Nations achievement in Afghanistan over recent months and of the scale of the challenge which the United Nations and others involved are now addressing. In this respect, one statistic cited today by the Deputy Secretary-General should confirm the reality to all of us. Over the coming months, food assistance will be provided to a staggering total of 8.8 million people. We can all be genuinely gratified by the work of our Secretary-General and his colleagues. The case of Afghanistan surely proves that an effective, well-supported United Nations is unquestionably indispensable to the world today.

It is Ireland's clear and unambiguous conviction that the international community, the Council and the United Nations as a whole must now assume our full obligations in supporting the Secretary-General's proposals, which he has placed before us, on how the United Nations can help the people of Afghanistan to reweave the shredded fabric of their country. This is not only because of implications for international peace and security — although these, of course, exist — but because we can truly do no less: it is now time, as Abraham Lincoln said of the tasks facing America after a terrible Civil War, to bind up a nation's wounds. That is what the proposals in this report of the Secretary-General really amount to.

The Secretary-General rightly describes the remarkable progress made in Afghanistan since the Bonn Agreement and the subsequent establishment of the Interim Authority, under the leadership of Chairman Karzai. The Cabinet has been formed and meets; work has substantially started on an interim budget; and a back-to-school campaign is very happily under way. Across the range of issues, in summary, a good beginning has been made.

At the same time, the Secretary-General rightly asks difficult questions regarding those elements that may continue to seek to disrupt the building of peace in Afghanistan. It is essential, as he says, that the Government be able to extend its authority throughout the territory of Afghanistan; that it enhance its legitimacy; and that it reinforce the importance of central authority, particularly in the lead-up to the emergency Loya Jirga due to be convened by 22 June.

Just three months remain until the convening of that forum. All in Afghanistan must cooperate with the Loya Jirga Commission, which has performed exceptionally well over the first two months of its existence. We are, of course, concerned at reports of attempts to exercise influence on the Commission, and we hope that all will assist in ensuring that the Commission can continue to operate unhindered. The extension of real stability throughout the country will be critical in this regard.

As the Secretary-General asserts, stability and security are essential to the success of the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of those contributing to the International Security Assistance Force in consolidating the stability of Kabul and its surrounds, permitting the return of substantial numbers of United Nations and other relief and reconstruction personnel. We hope the United Nations will gradually be able to

begin deployment of civilian personnel throughout the country to address the still-acute humanitarian needs of the Afghan population. We remain extremely concerned at continued reports of insecurity hampering the delivery of assistance in several parts of the country.

The Secretary-General outlines in clear and specific detail the proposed structure for the United Nations presence in Afghanistan: the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It is imperative that the integrated mission approach, which rightly builds on the lessons learned from past United Nations operations, be given real shape on the ground. It is also vitally important that all elements of the United Nations system cooperate in every respect with the Secretary-General and with Mr. Brahimi in making this carefully calculated approach work with maximum positive effect.

My delegation feels that the appointment, at the regional level, of designated representatives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is essential to the coherence and coordination of the United Nations Mission. Special Representative Brahimi has stressed throughout the past months that UNAMA should have the lightest possible international footprint. This is a strong phrase, and Mr. Brahimi is surely right. For this reason, we hope that all efforts will be made to ensure that the numbers of international staff are kept to the effective minimum. Afghan ownership of the relief and reconstruction process is essential to the long-term stability of the country.

I very much support the strong emphasis placed earlier by Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette in the area of human rights. Ireland is very concerned that human rights should continue to be placed at the forefront of United Nations efforts in Afghanistan. We were extremely gratified by the human rights workshop held earlier this month and attended by High Commissioner for Human Rights Robinson, marking International Women's Day, and by the Afghan working groups that have flowed from it.

We are enormously gratified by the profoundly positive transformation of the circumstances of women and girls in Afghanistan due to the successful developments of the past six months.

Given the very substantive successes to date of the Loya Jirga Commission, we look forward now to early progress on the creation of a human rights commission, which, as the Secretary-General notes, will greatly enhance the United Nations capacity to fulfil its role in developing a comprehensive human rights programme.

The reports of continuing human rights abuses, particularly directed at ethnic Pashtuns, remain extremely worrying. Such abuses are unacceptable, and the Interim Authority and all the elements that compose its membership, as well as the United Nations mission, must work together to ensure full adherence to human rights norms. Human rights violations of this kind can only contribute to a further refugee crisis and serve to exacerbate instability in parts of Afghanistan. By contrast, we are heartened by the very positive reports regarding the return of refugees from Pakistan and look forward to the extension of the facilitated return programme to Iran next month.

The beginning of the new school year in Afghanistan over the past few days is a powerful symbol of how much has changed in Afghanistan in just six months. We especially welcome the return of women and girls to the education system, while recognizing that almost all young Afghans have lost several vital years of education. Though conditions may remain less than ideal for some time, we appreciate the tremendous work that has been done by Afghan and international authorities and donors to make possible the opening of so many schools in time.

Ireland, along with others, has made substantial commitments to both relief and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Ireland contributed over €5 million in 2001 in humanitarian assistance. At Tokyo, we pledged €12 million over 3 years in reconstruction assistance. This is in addition to humanitarian aid. In 2002, we expect to exceed the level of humanitarian aid given in 2001. We welcome the most recent statements by Foreign Minister Abdullah confirming the commitment of the Afghan Interim Authority to giving the highest priority to drug control. The setting up of a drug-control unit in the Interior Ministry, as well as a State high commission on drug control, are positive steps in this regard.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan are both wise and also carefully considered in their detail. Ireland wholeheartedly

endorses them. We will play our full part in helping bring them to reality. None of us can do any less.

The President: I thank the representative of Ireland for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to see presiding over the Security Council the Foreign Minister of Norway, a State that is not only a neighbour here in the Council, but also a geographical neighbour of Russia with which we have the friendliest of relations in the political, trade, economic and other areas.

We join in the sincere condolences that have been expressed to the people and Government of Afghanistan over the earthquake in the northern parts of that country, which took a great toll in human life.

We are grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her participation in today's meeting and for the report she introduced on the situation in Afghanistan, which provides a good basis for our discussion.

For many years, the Council considered the situation in Afghanistan from the perspective of confronting the Taliban regime, which supported international terrorism, encouraged the production of and illicit trade in narcotic drugs, destroyed the historical and cultural landmarks of Afghanistan, flagrantly violated human rights and unleashed an open civil war against its own people. Fortunately, those dark days in the lives of Afghans are over. Thanks to the collective efforts of the international community, including the United Nations, the power of the Taliban movement has crumbled and the country has entered a new era in its life.

Like many Members of the United Nations, we eagerly looked forward to the proposals on the new role to be played by the United Nations in Afghanistan's post-conflict recovery. We agree with the assessment made in the Secretary-General's report of the current situation in the country and the stress placed on the various fields in which the United Nations is to play a leadership role.

We support the recommendation on the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which, under the guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, will be responsible for ensuring that all forms of United Nations assistance — political, human rights, law enforcement, gender equality, emergency assistance, economic rehabilitation and reconstruction — are designed to restore a peaceful existence for the Afghan people. The proposed structure and size of the Mission is, on the one hand, to ensure effective international participation in the recovery of Afghanistan and, on the other, to provide first and foremost for the active participation of Afghans themselves in the rebirth of their country.

During the course of the recent visit to Moscow of the head of the Interim Administration, Mr. Karzai, and his negotiations with President Putin and Foreign Minister Ivanov of Russia, we expressed our support for the efforts of the Afghan authorities, under United Nations auspices, to normalize the situation in the country, to establish Government institutions at the central and local levels and to restore social and economic infrastructure. Emphasis was placed on the importance of consistent compliance with the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, which has become the starting point for the formation of a stable Afghan State and civil society. Following Mr. Karzai's visit to Moscow, 17 memorandums were signed on cooperation between ministries and agencies, representatives of Russian business circles and the Afghan side. These memorandums relate fundamentally to the construction and restoration of petroleum and gas infrastructure, energy installations and the delivery of Russian agricultural vehicles, industrial equipment and various other types of machinery to Afghanistan.

We value the important role of the international community and of Norway, heading the Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority, in providing humanitarian assistance to that country. In the course of the first phase of humanitarian operations, Russia has also made its own contribution, providing direct assistance of over $12 million to Afghanistan. We are now preparing a project for providing assistance during the second phase.

We are pleased that peaceful life in Afghanistan is gradually being established. Afghans have begun to go to the movies and museums; girls and boys are attending schools; hospitals are opening.

The political process is also gaining momentum. Active preparations are under way for the pan-Afghan Loya Jirga in June, which will elect a Transitional Authority. We believe it important to emphasize once

again that, in preparing for convening the Loya Jirga, it is essential to ensure that the representatives of the Taliban and their followers have no place in future State institutions.

The most serious problem today is the problem of ensuring security in Afghanistan. We regularly receive reports on emerging hotbeds of conflict, in which the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorist groups are active. We are especially concerned by the presence of a large number of foreign mercenaries, including Chechens, among the terrorists.

We attach great importance to the activities of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in compliance with the mandate adopted by the Security Council in resolution 1386 (2001). We believe that ISAF is playing an important role in ensuring calm in Kabul, allowing the Interim Administration to work effectively. Obviously, questions relating to the activities of the Force under resolution 1386 (2001) must be coordinated with the Afghan authorities. If its mandate must be prolonged or expanded, the Security Council must be willing to consider doing so, bearing in mind the requests of the acting authorities in Afghanistan.

In the long term, as we see it, we must emphasize the establishment of a strictly Afghan army. In this connection, we would point to the onset of training, with the active participation of ISAF, for the first battalion of the National Guard. We welcome Germany's readiness to lead the training of the Afghan police force. In the course of the visits of the Ministers of Defence and Internal Affairs of Afghanistan to Moscow in February and March, the Russian side expressed its readiness to develop military and technical cooperation, with participation in the building of national armed forces and the establishment of law enforcement bodies.

Clearly, the establishment of armed forces and issues pertaining to the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan — as well as all other areas of international cooperation in helping that country — require the most serious coordination of effort. It would be absolutely unacceptable for the territory of Afghanistan to become the arena of rivalry, competition or struggle among the various interests. If that should occur, the opportunity for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan may once again be squandered.

We trust that the United Nations will assume a central role in establishing broad international cooperation in post-conflict Afghanistan and in coordinating all international efforts to assist that country.

In this connection, we attach great significance to UNAMA's work. Russian specialists who have the necessary experience are prepared to take a most active part in the Mission's activities. We have given our concrete proposals relating to this area to the Secretariat, and we expect operative replies to them.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Minister, we are pleased to see you here in New York, presiding over this important Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, and I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the serious and effective way in which your delegation has led our Council's work this month.

On behalf of Guinea, I would also like to join other delegations in conveying our condolences to the Afghan people and Government following the earthquake that took place in the northern part of the country. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of the report and for the additional information Ms. Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General has given us.

I would also like to commend Mr. Jean Arnault and Mr. Nigel Fisher on their appointments as Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, dealing respectively with political affairs and with humanitarian and development affairs. We wish them every success in carrying out their mission.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the successes of the Interim Authority in the implementation of the political process resulting from the Bonn Agreement. This shows the Afghan people's determination to emerge from 23 years of a war that has left deep scars. We encourage the Afghan authorities to continue their actions in order to conclude national reconciliation, democratization, stabilization and restoration of the country. The back-to-school campaign has registered significant progress, with the return of children to schools in Kabul on 23 March. We followed this event with relief, especially the return of young girls to school.

We would like to thank all of those who in various forms have contributed to the establishment of a basis for viable development in Afghanistan. We expressly convey our gratitude to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for the return of calm to Kabul and its environs, as well as to those countries that are ensuring training and equipment for the army and police in order to consolidate the indigenous security sector.

The success of the political process so methodically embarked upon depends on the restoration of a climate of security throughout the country, for the continuation of acts of banditry and rivalry among factions trying to achieve power, pockets of resistance of the Al Qaeda forces and the Taliban and repeated violations of human rights are all factors that destabilize and threaten peace.

In my delegation's view, the restoration of peace and security should enable the Afghan authorities to embark upon the reconstruction of the country, with the assistance of the international community. In this context, my delegation once again appeals to donors to quickly make good on their pledges of contributions made during the Tokyo International Conference. The recovery of Afghanistan will depend largely on this, in view of the immense and urgent needs felt in all areas.

If some difficulties have been overcome, as is pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, we still note that the humanitarian crisis, particularly the food crisis, remains a concern. In such circumstances, we still need time and additional financial resources to cope with this. In this connection, humanitarian agencies in the field should mobilize further in order to bring increased assistance to refugees returning from neighbouring countries, as well as to displaced persons.

My delegation believes that these activities should go hand in hand with the continuation and broadening of the mine clearance programme. This would facilitate the implementation of development projects that would have a speedy impact to the benefit of the people.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to encourage the rapid and effective establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This would be the best way to consolidate our achievements and to continue the implementation of the Bonn Agreement in a harmonious and integrated manner.

My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Levitte for the draft resolution now being prepared and would like here and now to express our great interest in this initiative.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Gokool (Mauritius): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I express our deepest sympathy to and solidarity with the Government and people of Afghanistan for their losses suffered as a result of the devastating earthquake in the north of the country.

Let me join others in thanking the Secretary-General for the very comprehensive and detailed report and Ms. Fréchette for her statement this morning.

Mr. President, your chairing this meeting today signifies how much Norway takes to heart the peace process in Afghanistan. We are very grateful for this.

Mauritius fully supports the recommendations and observations made in the report. As observed in its paragraph 116, we must set realistic and achievable objectives, which we can attain only through genuine commitment and determination. We agree that Afghanistan now has the chance at least to be a country at peace with its neighbours and itself. We must, however, strive hard to translate this into reality.

Among other things, two important ingredients for the success of reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes are, first, the readiness of the Afghans themselves to assume responsibility for rebuilding their country, and, secondly, the continued effort and commitment of the international community. Reading through the report, my delegation has no doubt that both ingredients are adequately expressed. We appreciate the majestic strides made towards normalcy and peace by the Interim Administration.

We also appreciate the preparatory work for the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga, which would pave the way for a broad-based multi-ethnic, multi-religious representative assembly for a united Afghanistan.

We support the proposal for a single mission, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which will bring all humanitarian and reconstruction activities under one umbrella.

Like other delegations, we too believe that the challenges of UNAMA will be multifaceted and

complex. Any shortcoming or delay in the implementation process of the plan would reverse all achievements. Complacency, procrastination and unnecessary delays in extending the pledges of support, financial or otherwise, would be a real impediment. We must at all cost avoid the effects of the domino theory and start putting all efforts into the reconstruction of Afghanistan, which could take many, many years to complete.

In this regard, we have just asked ourselves what the priorities should be. I would like to enumerate four of these. The first priority is security assurance. As the report mentions in paragraph 45, the unstable security situation in certain parts of the country remains a very worrying factor. A stable and peaceful life cannot be possible in a country where the threat of violence and ethnic rivalry prevails. Recent incidents in Afghanistan prove once again how dangerous it would be for the international community to operate without assured security. The Interim Administration is trying to build its capacity for providing peace and security to the Afghan people.

To meet Afghanistan's immediate needs, my delegation fully supports the proposal for an expanded International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), an extended mandate as suggested by Chairman Karzai. Any effort to address the immediate concerns of Afghanistan without prioritizing the security aspect would fail to produce the desired results.

Secondly, the reconciliation process should not be delayed. The clashes between Afghan political leaders in certain provinces are matters of real concern. No political advancement towards a broad-based and representative Government in Afghanistan will be possible if ethnic rivalries are left unchecked. We must ensure that the establishment of the emergency Loya Jirga will give due consideration to ethnic and regional differences and will help accommodate the parties in a fair and equitable manner.

Thirdly, I would like to associate myself with the comments of other delegations concerning the question of narcotic drugs and drug trafficking, which should be urgently addressed. The pre-assessment survey of opium poppy cultivation conducted by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme confirms earlier indications that cultivation has resumed at a relatively high level throughout the country, after the considerable decline in 2001. As terrorism exploits the drug trade, the international community should take prompt action in this regard. We welcome the decree passed on 22 December by the Interim Administration banning the cultivation, production, processing, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs. We hope that the restructured Afghan police will effectively deal with that problem.

Fourthly, with regard to humanitarian concerns, no political process will succeed in bringing about stability and peace in Afghanistan if the humanitarian situation is not addressed in the right way and at the right time. The plight of refugees and displaced persons must be given the consideration that it deserves. More than 20 per cent of the Afghan population has been displaced; the poverty rate is increasing at an alarming pace; food distribution to the needy in the affected areas is uneven; and blatant abuses of human rights, especially those of women and children, have rent the social fabric of the country. My delegation feels that it is high time for the international community to focus its efforts on seeking appropriate solutions to the humanitarian problems. We welcome the proposal to confer responsibility for relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan on the Deputy Special Representative, to whom we wish every success in this regard.

We believe that the international community's efforts in Afghanistan should lead to durable results. It is the belief of my delegation that in our efforts we must ensure that the Afghan reality is kept fully in view.

Finally, I would like to stress that national prosperity is furthered not by war but by peace, and that it is not to be found in opposition or confrontation, but in cooperation. It is a positive-sum game, in which all the parties win. The partnership between the international community and the Afghan people represents a leap forward, and this process needs to be further promoted in order successfully to realize programmes to rebuild Afghanistan. We hope that international multilateral and bilateral donors will continue to contribute to the development of Afghanistan.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritius for the kind words he addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Norway.

Like previous speakers, I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette for her briefing and for the comprehensive report. This debate clearly shows that the United Nations is on the right track in Afghanistan. I warmly commend the work of the Special Representative and his staff. I can assure Mr. Brahimi and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) of Norway's continued support, both in the Council and in the Afghan Support Group, which we are chairing.

We only have to look back a few months to recall the remarkable progress that has been achieved. We have seen the fall of the Taliban, which, with its repressive fundamentalism and its support for terrorism, led Afghanistan into international isolation. It was a regime which had no regard for the suffering of millions of Afghans under its misrule.

In December, the Bonn Agreement created a representative interim leadership, which is demonstrating its responsibility in returning Afghanistan to peace and stability. The Security Council responded in January by lifting the sanctions on the country, while tightening the measures against the Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists. Only three months into the term of the Interim Authority, led by Hamid Karzai, the future for the Afghan people looks more hopeful than it has for a very long time.

Last weekend, at the start of the Afghan new year, schools were reopened. Now girls too are allowed to learn, and women allowed to teach, for the first time in years. Kabul is peaceful, its people displaying the dignity that the Taliban sought to deny them. In other cities and areas around the country, too, life is returning to normal.

I warmly commend the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for the role it is playing. Norway is proud to provide troops to ISAF under the able command of the United Kingdom. We look forward to continuing under a new leadership. Norway will work with Council members to ensure the timely extension of ISAF's mandate beyond June.

A humanitarian disaster, which seemed to be under way last autumn, has been averted. Relief aid is now reaching most of the needy. Our thanks go to all the women and men involved — often at great personal risk — in this effort. As chair of the Afghan Support Group, Norway will continue to work with other donors, the United Nations mission and the Interim Authority to improve the coordination of aid and to increase access to remote areas.

Let there be no doubt: many challenges still lie ahead. Terrorists and the Taliban still pose a threat to the peace and the political process. The recent combat operations conducted by coalition forces against Al Qaeda supporters testify to this.

Norway is proud to provide personnel to the counter-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. We will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States and other coalition partners in fighting global terrorism. We will work to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a base for terrorists.

To succeed, the Interim Authority must extend its influence beyond Kabul, to all parts of Afghanistan. Public services must be improved. The Loya Jirga must be supported. This will require increased international assistance. More funds are needed for the Interim Authority to pay salaries and to function as an administration. Norway has paid $6 million to the United Nations Development Programme trust fund. We call on donors to help find the funds that Mr. Brahimi has asked for.

Measures are needed also to ensure that the security situation continues to improve. Norway is contributing to the international efforts under way to support the establishment of national Afghan police and security forces. I welcome the lead taken by Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and others in this regard.

Recovery and reconstruction must be undertaken with a view to underpinning long-term prospects for peace and political progress. Norway looks forward to working with the Afghan authorities and donors, including through the Implementation Group, to make concrete and constructive use of the assistance pledged at the Tokyo Conference.

As agreed at the Afghan Support Group meeting in Geneva earlier this month, basic humanitarian assistance and financing remain an immediate priority. Much of the $40 million that Norway will provide this year will be for relief aid.

The United Nations and its new, integrated mission have a key role in the Bonn implementation process in assisting the Afghan authorities and in sustaining the progress achieved, not least with regard to women's rights and all the rights of the child.

Norway supports the Secretary-General's proposal for a lean, integrated structure for UNAMA and a strong coordinating role for the Special Representative. The Afghanistan Support Group will work with UNAMA to improve coordination, and with multilateral and bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and the Afghan authorities. This must go hand in hand with meaningful assistance at the local community level. By using Afghan staff, UNAMA will promote national capacity and ownership of the process.

Continued, long-term commitment by the United Nations and its Member States is needed to ensure that Afghanistan remains firmly on the path to peace and reconciliation and does not again become a haven for terrorists. Constructive support, in particular by neighbouring States, will be crucial. The Council will do its part, next by adopting a resolution endorsing the new United Nations Mission.

We look forward to seeing UNAMA operational. Ultimately it is up to the Afghan leaders and people themselves to create conditions for lasting peace and development in their country. But the international community can and must help.

I resume my function as President of the Council. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — the associated countries Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries belonging to the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

First of all, may I express the sorrow of the European Union at the consequences of the terrible earthquake that occurred in northern Afghanistan. This is one more hardship for the Afghan people, which has already suffered untold troubles. The European Union has already sent initial humanitarian assistance in this connection.

The past months have witnessed very important events on the path towards the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan through reconciliation and a representative government, as well as in eliminating the use of Afghan territory by terrorists and curbing narcotics production and trafficking.

First, an agreement was reached by the Afghan parties in Bonn on 5 December 2001, which constitutes the basic road map for the political future of Afghanistan. Secondly, there is the creation and full deployment of the International Security Assistance Force, known as ISAF, to which European Union members are currently the major contributors. Last, though not least, there was the Tokyo International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, co-chaired by the European Union.

In spite of these very positive events, enormous challenges remain before the Afghan people can regain a measure of normalcy. To name but a few, we can mention the timely and full implementation of the Bonn Agreement, the lack of security in wide areas of the country, the dire humanitarian situation, the dismal state of health and education, the situation of women and children, and the very serious and extensive risk arising from landmines. The European Union is committed to helping the Afghan people to surmoun these problems and is ready to carry its share in cooperation with neighbouring countries and the rest of the international community.

The European Union has played and continues to play a very important role in the current Afghan process. Given that the United Nations has been entrusted with the central coordinating role, the European Union seeks to support and promote the United Nations-led process and the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. The European Union Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Klaus Peter Klaiber, has a primary role in the coordination of European Union efforts.

The European Union commends the Secretary-General for the excellent report, which summarizes the most significant developments for Afghanistan since the signing of the Bonn Agreement and proposes a structure for a United Nations presence in that country. We appreciate the effort made in recent months by the United Nations system under the guidance of the Special Representative to bring together their efforts and capacities so as to create a really integrated United Nations mission in Afghanistan.

The European Union supports the proposed mandate and basic operating principles for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which provide for an integrated structure under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and which will support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement by the Afghans themselves with the assistance of the international community. The proposed overall structure seems to be well thought out and focuses on two main goals: building a strongly coordinated United Nations presence and avoiding dependency on international staff, so as to encourage development of domestic capacities.

However, in order to meet the objective of a light international footprint, UNAMA structures should take into account already existing initiatives in order to avoid duplication of work. The European Union welcomes the proposed structure of lead sectoral agencies for the implementation of humanitarian and reconstruction activities by the United Nations family in Afghanistan. We appeal for a strong and effective coordination and collaboration in the field. In this respect, the European Union would welcome a memorandum of understanding to be signed between the lead agency and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency concept would be spelled out more in detail. The European Union is ready to support and assist UNAMA.

I will now turn to the most pressing issue in Afghanistan today, which is security. Thanks to the efforts of the international community, Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terrorists, and we have been able to avoid a humanitarian disaster. However, these developments achieved thus far with enormous effort are not guaranteed.

Security across Afghanistan is an essential element for achieving the goals set forth in Bonn. We support the early extension of ISAF beyond its current six-month mandate. Aside from their participation in ISAF, European Union's member States are contributing and will continue to contribute to the creation of Afghan security institutions, including the development of a national army and an independent police force. In this regard, the European Union profoundly regrets the tragic loss of five young nationals of two of its member States whose lives were given in the effort to improve the security situation in Afghanistan.

The European Union underlines the importance of an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for reducing the risks that stem from the existence of numerous informal armed groups and bringing their members into civil society. Furthermore, the European Union considers the formation of a national army of the utmost importance. We welcome the work ISAF has initiated to train the first battalion of the Afghan National Guard. The development of national and local police and an effective justice system are also essential components in creating a stable and secure environment.

Concerning the political situation, the main goal should be the punctual implementation of the measures agreed to in Bonn. The emergency Loya Jirga will inaugurate the next major phase of the path towards a fully representative, multi-ethnic and democratic Afghan political system. It is essential that the selection process take place in a secure and neutral political environment. The European Union will continue to support this process and will seek to ensure that it is free from intimidation or any other form of pressure or manipulation. Through important contributions of several of its member States and of the European Commission, the European Union is helping to finance the emergency Loya Jirga.

The European Union reiterates its firm support to the Interim Authority of Afghanistan. We call upon the current Interim Authority, future administrations and Afghan leaders to support and fully implement the Bonn Agreement in order to ensure respect for the rule of law, democracy, pluralism and the human rights of all, including those of women, children and all ethnic groups. The commitment entered into in Bonn to hold free and fair elections within two years of the convening of the Loya Jirga should be strictly adhered to.

The European Union believes that Afghanistan should be guided by the following generally accepted principles enshrined in international instruments to which Afghanistan is party: responsible and representative Government with a mandate periodically renewed by the Afghan people; commitment to political pluralism; respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender or any other distinction;

commitment to maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring countries and to the prevention of the use of Afghan territory for subversive or terrorist purposes or activities; and commitment to poppy eradication and to the prevention of drug trafficking.

All of those principles should be properly reflected in the future constitution to be adopted within the time frame agreed in Bonn. The European Union is ready to maintain an active dialogue with the Interim Administration and successor Governments in order to assist in attaining the political objectives laid down in Bonn and to ensure Afghan ownership of the political process and the reconstruction of the country.

The reconstruction of Afghanistan is essential to attaining the objectives set out in Bonn. The European Union is committed to that goal and, through the assistance provided by its member States and by the European Community, is one of the leading partners in both humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. The European Union co-hosted a successful Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group meeting in Brussels in December 2001, which paved the way for the Tokyo Conference. It is pertinent to recall that the co-chairs' summary of conclusions of the Tokyo Conference stressed the idea that reconstruction assistance will be conditional upon all Afghan parties positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn.

Through contributions announced at Tokyo and thereafter, the European Union will provide 600 million euros, which represents 30 per cent of the total announced pledges for the year 2002. Similarly, the European Union has pledged 2.3 billion euros for the period 2002-2006, covering 23 per cent of the needs identified by the joint assessment by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. This, in turn, represents about 45 per cent of the total announced commitment of the international community.

An accountable Afghan administration and effective donor coordination are imperative for the reconstruction process to succeed. Afghanistan needs accountable, transparent and efficient authorities. Donors can support them through coordination that follows the procedures agreed to in Tokyo. The Presidency of the European Commission, in its capacity as co-chair of the Steering Group, will endeavour to achieve close coordination with other major donors, international financial institutions and United Nations agencies. In that regard, the Afghanistan reconstruction Implementation Group can play a coordinating role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan until a consultative group is established.

There is an acute need for continued humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan under effective United Nations coordination. The European Union will support the efforts of the humanitarian agencies on the ground. As regards donor coordination, the Afghan Support Group could contribute to bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and the beginning of assistance for the country's reconstruction. Given that the chairman of the Support Group also holds a vice-chairmanship of the Implementation Group, the risk of problematic transition gaps is reduced even further.

Respect for human rights is essential for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups. The European Union will assist in establishing national and local structures to ensure respect for human rights without discrimination. The European Union believes that Afghan women must enjoy equal access to education and employment, have the opportunity to participate without discrimination in the political and social life of their country and be able to play a central role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The European Union calls on the United Nations and on all of Afghanistan's partners to support relevant national initiatives and to fully integrate gender considerations in their political dialogue and reconstruction programming.

Successful reconstruction of Afghanistan and the implementation of the Bonn Agreement will depend to a large extent on the cooperation and commitment of neighbouring countries. In that regard, the European Union is ready to take into account this regional dimension.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that peace, security, stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan are interdependent issues. They should be addressed first and foremost by the Afghan people, but the international community should not falter in its support. The European Union stands ready to make its contribution to that common task.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I too would like to begin by conveying to our Afghan brothers, on behalf of my Government and the people of Pakistan, our profound grief and sympathy over the tragic loss of life and the material devastation caused by the earthquakes in the northern part of Afghanistan, which have also affected north-western parts of Pakistan. I want to tell my brother Ambassador Ravan Farhâdi, present here, that we in Pakistan share his grief and pain, just as we have always felt the pain and grief of Afghanistan in its difficult moments. We know that this is a moment of supreme grief for his people. The Government and the people of Pakistan would like to do whatever they can to help their Afghan brothers.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, who I understand made a comprehensive presentation earlier this morning on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2002/278).

We are delighted to see you in the Chair this morning, Mr. Minister, presiding over an important meeting of the Security Council on a subject that has been haunting us all for decades, and which today affects us all and must be the focus of the priority attention of the international community in terms of chasing away the ghosts of violence and misery that have been haunting that unfortunate and war-ravaged country.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan. We also welcome the continuing efforts and engagement of the United Nations in facilitating the implementation of the Bonn Agreement.

In this regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal, contained in his report, for a two-pillared structure for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) — first, to facilitate the political process in Afghanistan, and secondly to assist in the humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of that war-ravaged country. We agree with the concept of what is described by the Secretary-General as a "light expatriate 'footprint'" (*S/2002/278, para. 98*) and with its aim to bolster Afghan capacities. We hope that the United Nations will continue to play its role in helping the Afghans find home-grown solutions to their problems and bring their country back into the comity of nations as a responsible and law-abiding State.

In trying to assist in Afghanistan's political, humanitarian and economic recovery, we must draw lessons from the country's tragic past. Not only is Afghanistan one of the most difficult challenges the international community has faced in recent times, it also represents a case in which a country so much in need of international support and assistance was neglected, isolated and left in the lurch, mercilessly rendering it a wilderness that attracted runaway dissidents and terrorists from all over the world.

Today, however, is not the time for remorse or for remaining frozen in the past. We need a new beginning. Unusual situations always warrant unusual and fresh responses and approaches. As we seek to rebuild Afghanistan, we must be guided by the need not only to rectify the mistakes of the past, but also to avoid repeating them. History always provides the most relevant lessons.

Now that the international community has committed itself to healing Afghanistan, we hope that it will not walk away from the country again. It must remain engaged in Afghanistan and in the region. A country ravaged by war has to be rebuilt; a society torn by conflicts has to be healed. All this requires commitment and perseverance. Afghanistan must never again be allowed to become a breeding ground or haven for terrorists. The long-term solution of the problem of terrorism in Afghanistan lies in the restoration of peace and stability and in the reconstruction of the country. No amount of financial resources alone would be sufficient to accomplish those tasks. The international community must honour its obligations, not only for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan, but also for its own greater good.

The time has now come to break the vicious circle of the past. Humanitarian relief and reconstruction plans must be aimed at genuinely addressing the causes and consequences of the instability and violence which the Afghan people have endured for decades. Every economic plan, whether for relief or for reconstruction, must generate job opportunities and employment for the common Afghan people — those who are living in the country. Their attention must be diverted from misery and violence to peaceful and constructive activities.

Extensive blueprints have been prepared by the regional organization known as the Economic Cooperation Organization. My friend Ambassador Farhâdi is well aware of the goals and objectives of that organization, which I had the privilege to serve as its Secretary-General for four years. Those blueprints could be utilized in converting this landlocked county into a bridgehead connecting Central Asia with the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.

Afghanistan has the potential to be the shortest transit route between the Central Asian States and the rest of the world. In due course, road, rail and gas and oil pipeline projects — which are already there — passing through Afghanistan could bring unprecedented economic well-being to the country. Perhaps this would require various consortiums to be constituted by the international community. No politics should be involved in this effort; it is a genuine need of the Afghan people, and the world at large would benefit from such economic development.

Here I must caution that any attempt sponsored or exploited by external vested interests to pit Afghanistan against any of its neighbours or to deepen its ethnic or sectarian divide would only prolong the agony of its people. We must guard against any such temptation. It is needless to emphasize that an Afghanistan at peace with itself and with all of its neighbours is the surest safeguard of its own future security, as well as that of the entire region.

Security remains the most pressing issue at this point in time. It is the very prerequisite for the implementation of the Bonn Agreement and is imperative for a stable political and economic future in Afghanistan. Lack of security has been a major hindrance to stability in the past and continues to threaten peace today. The Afghan people have suffered far too long at the hands of ambitious warlords. Equally, nature has not been fair to the Afghan people; the country has suffered frequent calamities.

The international community must therefore ensure that the old rivalries and hatreds which once wreaked havoc across Afghanistan are not given a chance to obstruct the establishment of a stable political dispensation in that country. Similarly, humanitarian relief must come forth generously to alleviate the misery of the Afghans who are either displaced internally or who have been forced to leave their country for reasons beyond their control.

Without security, there can be no peace in Afghanistan, no unity, no stability, no humanitarian relief, no reconstruction or recovery. I think that this is a point that everyone appreciates, understands and agrees with. Even the Secretary-General has made this point. The Bonn Agreement stipulated the establishment of a United Nations mandated force for the maintenance of security in Kabul as well as in other areas of the country.

While we support the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, we feel that its size and scope must now be expanded and extended to all of the country, especially its major urban centres. ISAF, in the absence of a proper Afghan security force, is the only option we have at the moment, and restricting it only to Kabul would, in effect, defeat the very purpose for which it was established.

In addition to the efforts of the international community to help them, we hope that all Afghan factions and groups will avail themselves of this unique opportunity to extricate their country from the abyss in which it has remained for the last two decades. The success of the Bonn Agreement will depend on how the Afghan leaders acquit themselves of rebuilding their country through a mutual spirit of accommodation. Tribal and ethnic structures and traditions will, of course, remain of special relevance in any future set-up. While the world owes the Afghans a helping hand, in the larger measure and in the ultimate analysis, it is they themselves who will make or mar the future of their country, and they recognize this.

Pakistan, for its part, remains committed to continuing to play its role in assisting the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have assured the Afghan Interim Administration, under the leadership of Chairman Hamid Karzai, of our full support and cooperation. Over the last two decades, Pakistan has been providing shelter to millions of Afghan refugees, without any outside assistance. In addition, we have recently pledged another $100 million worth of assistance for Afghanistan's immediate rehabilitation and reconstruction needs. No country, other than Afghanistan itself, has suffered more from the conflict and violence in Afghanistan than Pakistan, and no country could have a greater stake in the return of peace and stability to Afghanistan than Pakistan. My country, like the rest of the international community, hopes that this new era will bring positive changes to

Afghanistan. We hope that the efforts of the United Nations in Afghanistan will truly contribute to the achievement of peace, security and development in that country, which needs these so badly.

Finally, I need not emphasize again that this time, the international community must not walk away from Afghanistan, as it did in the past. It must demonstrate the political will and the determination to engage and help the Afghan people in rebuilding peace and the economy of their country, and this time the United Nations must be an effective instrument of relief and development in Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General is correct when he says in his report that Afghanistan is a shattered society. It will certainly take a long time to heal the wounds left by 23 years of war. The process of healing has started and must not be allowed to reverse itself. This requires from all — from the Afghans themselves as well as from the international community — a continued commitment and determination to stay the course. Afghanistan now has the chance at least to be a country at peace with its neighbours and with itself.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): At the outset, allow me to express my Government's sincere condolences to those affected by yet another earthquake, the one that struck northern Afghanistan last night. We are receiving disturbing information — that thousands may have died and many thousands more have lost their homes. Urgent assistance is needed to help the victims. We welcome the fact that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General has already convened a meeting with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in Kabul, with the aim of assisting the Interim Administration.

At the midpoint of the six-month term of the Interim Authority of Afghanistan, and with the Secretary-General's comprehensive report issued last week, we have a sufficient basis for reviewing the progress made thus far and for considering ways to proceed henceforth.

I am happy to note today that last Saturday, as the result of the successful "back to school" campaign, over 1 million Afghan children have gone back to school, many of them for the first time in six years. Looking back over the three and a half months since the Bonn Agreement was signed, we cannot but note that a number of significant achievements have been made. The Interim Authority has been established; the Loya Jirga Commission is up and running; the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been deployed; and the Tokyo Conference was held successfully, as were national conferences, with the participation of regional commanders and governors. It is also important to note that salaries have been paid to the civil servants of the central Government and that salary payments are on the way for local officials.

The fact that so much progress has been made in this short period towards the restoration of peace and stability is indeed extraordinary, but the situation in Afghanistan is still fraught with grave difficulties. It is therefore necessary to continue our efforts well into the foreseeable future so as to ensure that Afghanistan will be able to pursue its course of development in a peaceful and stable environment. In this context, allow me briefly to touch upon a few points which Japan believes to be of particular importance.

On the political front, the next important step is the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga. We warmly commend the accomplishments made so far by the Loya Jirga Commission, particularly its successful visits to the regions. A number of additional needs will emerge as the convening of the Loya Jirga approaches, and the timely initiatives taken by the Governments of Germany, the United Kingdom and other countries to support this process are much appreciated.

It is important for all parties to remind themselves that the emergency Loya Jirga will mark only the midpoint in the process leading to the establishment of a legitimately elected Government. Key words for the Loya Jirga should be compromise and tolerance, with all parties working together to establish an effectively functioning Transitional Authority that is capable of carrying the country through the next phase of the Bonn process.

It is essential to ensure that the recovery and reconstruction process continues to have a positive impact on the political process. In this regard, all parties need to be reminded that, as stated in the co-chairs' summary of conclusions of the Tokyo Conference,

> "assistance will be conditional on all Afghan parties' positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn."

On the other hand, we are beginning to detect a certain level of frustration in Afghanistan at the current pace of implementation of the pledges and commitments. The donors and United Nations agencies must do their part by rapidly implementing their assistance in a strategically coherent and coordinated manner so that the people of Afghanistan can tangibly feel the will of the international community. While I am happy to note that some concrete results are starting to emerge, as exemplified by the "Back to School" campaign led by the United Nations Children's Fund, we will need to strengthen our efforts so as to continue producing such results. In this connection, the Implementation Group meeting to be held in Kabul on 10 and 11 April under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Amin Arsala will be an important opportunity to coordinate our assistance to Afghanistan.

For its part, Japan has been making steady progress in the disbursement of the $250 million that it pledged in Tokyo for 2002. As introduced by Under-Secretary-General Prendergast in his statement to the Council two weeks ago, Japan has funded the United Nations Development Programme's Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme, designed to provide employment for over 20,000 people in labour-intensive public works projects in Kabul. Japan is the single largest contributor to the "Back to School" campaign. Other recent contributions include $20 million for demining activities and $12 million for basic medical equipment, medicine and other health-related items. I urge Council members to refer to the fact sheet attached to the distributed text of my statement for a more comprehensive list of Japan's contributions as of March 2002.

I have touched upon two important aspects of the situation in Afghanistan: the political process, on the one hand, and recovery and reconstruction, on the other. Needless to say, neither of these processes can proceed without the provision of nationwide security. In this regard, we thank the countries participating in ISAF, especially the United Kingdom for its leadership, and welcome the progress made so far in the training of the Afghan military and police. We take note of the request made by Chairman Karzai for the expansion of ISAF and agree with the Secretary-General that, whatever form of international security assistance is to be provided, speed is of the essence. I wish to add my voice to those who are asking the Council for its early examination and its determined action.

Before I conclude, allow me to reaffirm Japan's support for the Secretary-General and his Special Representative as they pursue their mandate in Afghanistan. In this context, we hope that the Security Council will act soon so that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will be established in a timely manner.

Lastly, let me appeal to the people of Afghanistan to continue their efforts to produce concrete results on both the political and reconstruction fronts, which are also necessary in order to sustain the willingness of the international community to lend its support. I say this not as a critic, but as a committed friend of Afghanistan. All of us here at the United Nations know how difficult it is to sustain international attention, and this unique opportunity to help Afghanistan develop as a stable and prosperous country must not be squandered.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Let me at the outset welcome you, Sir, to New York and congratulate you on the skill with which Norway, Ambassador Kolby in particular, has guided the work of the Security Council this month. Let me at the outset also associate myself and the Government and people of Australia with the expressions of regret from our colleagues today at the appalling natural tragedy which has occurred in Afghanistan. Ambassador Farhâdi has the sympathy and support of all Australians.

It is very timely and relevant to hold a meeting on Afghanistan and to do so in a format that allows for the views of interested Member States to be heard. We all have a stake in seeing Afghanistan recover and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to help.

The Secretary-General's report presents a comprehensive picture of the situation in Afghanistan and the challenges ahead. Australia agrees with and welcomes the thrust of the report. We would like to draw out three aspects which we feel will be important to the success of the United Nations involvement in Afghanistan.

First, as to the issue of security, there is for now no greater risk to Afghanistan's recovery than a possible lapse back into violence. Ridding Afghanistan of the terrorist threat posed by Al Qaeda and Taliban

fighters remains the first priority. There can be no true security in Afghanistan, and indeed beyond, until this is achieved.

Unfortunately, this of course is not the only threat. The impulse in Afghanistan to resort to violence to achieve political and other objectives remains dangerously real. This impulse can be and is being dampened by the external military presence, but such a presence is not the long-term answer. Ideally, one might want to see the International Security Assistance Force expanded numerically and extended geographically. This is to be encouraged, as is an extension of its mandate beyond the initial six-month period, but planning also has to be based on realistic expectations.

Consequently, the responsibility of Afghan leaders to achieve political progress, as set out in the Bonn Agreement, is all the greater. The successful convening of the emergency Loya Jirga must be pursued with utmost vigour. The risk of a return to violence is inversely related to the authority and legitimacy that the Loya Jirga and Interim Administration achieve. Political progress is also needed to underpin a unified national military. Afghanistan's neighbours, including through the "six-plus-two" group, can help foster a benign security environment.

This brings me to my second point, and it is this: political legitimacy does not emerge in a vacuum. It requires resources and the intelligent deployment of resources. The Tokyo Conference demonstrated the willingness of the international community to support Afghanistan. For its part, Australia has pledged over 40 million Australian dollars. We have also made a contribution to the Afghan Interim Administration Fund.

While the international support is welcome, it is important that funds be made available expeditiously and that programmes be coordinated. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's intention for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to have a unified, integrated structure under the authority and leadership of Mr. Brahimi. It will be important, too, that political objectives and relief, recovery and reconstruction activities be mutually supporting. All United Nations agencies need to work towards common goals.

International assistance should build up the strength and authority of Afghan institutions and not substitute for them. UNAMA should therefore be a lean operation with a light footprint and with a decentralized structure to support regional activities. The ultimate yardstick of UNAMA's success will not be what it has done, but what it has helped Afghans — including Afghan civil society and the private sector — to do.

The third point I want to make also relates to resources and legitimacy, but from a different perspective.

The efforts of the international community can and will be undermined if illegal sources of funds are available to those who do not accept the authority of the Afghan State. For this reason, among others, the fight against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs needs to be a very high priority. We welcome the intention to build a strong drug-control unit in the Afghan police. We also encourage the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to work closely with the Interim Administration.

Alternative sources of income need to be found quickly to avoid a resurgence of criminal activity. Aid needs to be creatively designed and speedily delivered. Reconstruction must proceed together with relief and recovery. The role of the private sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and traditional trading capabilities should be emphasized.

Finally, it must be said that no durable peace, reconciliation and development is possible without explicit attention to the rights and special needs of Afghan women and children. These considerations must be woven into all of UNAMA's activities. Women should be fully involved in all decisions about Afghanistan's future. Consistent with resolution 1325 (2000), a gender perspective should inform Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building.

We Australians have no illusions about the complexity of the task of rebuilding Afghanistan. The Secretary-General's report does, however, provide a realistic basis for planning how best the United Nations can contribute.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words.

The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President, for accommodating me in the forenoon portion of today's Council meeting. We welcome you to the Council and convey our deep appreciation of the contribution of Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby and his team to the work of the Council. Today's meeting is timely and, under your presidency, most appropriate, as Norway has provided valuable assistance for Afghanistan. We should also like to congratulate Mexico on last month's presidency and on having brought greater transparency to the work of the Council by holding open briefings by the Secretariat on issues of importance, including Afghanistan.

We convey our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the people of Afghanistan and to the Interim Administration for the terrible loss of life and devastation in the tragic earthquake that befell their country yesterday.

On 22 December 2001, when the Interim Administration of Chairman Karzai took charge, the challenges confronting Afghanistan were many, and each was daunting and formidable by itself. Among those challenges were: to provide security without a national army or police for a people which had not known peace for decades; in a landscape of ruin, to provide some of the bare minimum public services that any society expects from its Government; to provide humanitarian assistance to poverty-stricken areas devastated by war and drought; to reconstruct a country utterly shattered by decades-long conflict; to heal the deep wounds of the past; to promote national reconciliation; and to restore kinship.

The Interim Administration has just completed 100 days. So much was expected of it, and quite remarkably, it has accomplished so much in so little time, with so few resources. It is a vindication of the faith reposed by the international community in the Interim Administration and in the overwhelming yearning of the Afghans to break from the recent past and to move towards a future full of promise and hope. It is a manifestation of the indomitable spirit for which the Afghans are justly known.

However, no one is in doubt that the Interim Administration has only just taken the first steps in a long and arduous, but fulfilling and rewarding, journey. The Taliban and Al Qaeda, the twin tormentors of Afghanistan, are down but not out. As recent events in Afghanistan have amply demonstrated, those forces of darkness are still there, hidden in caves and crevasses, lying low and waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Collectively, the international community has paid a very heavy price for allowing those malevolent forces to seize and dominate Afghanistan. Those forces can have no place in Afghanistan or anywhere else. They have to be extirpated at the root in the interest not just of Afghanistan but also of the countries in its neighbourhood and of the international community. This is a collective imperative and obligation from which we cannot turn away, no matter how long it takes or how demanding it may become.

As clearly brought out by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2002/278), the security situation, particularly outside Kabul, remains a cause of concern. While the Interim Administration is resolutely trying gradually to re-establish a sense of security, it lacks the resources, particularly a trained and well-equipped police and military force. Until such time as the Interim Administration acquires those resources, it requires and has requested international assistance. In January, in this very Chamber, Chairman Karzai appealed to the Council to expand and extend the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). While we recognize that this is a decision first and foremost of the members participating in ISAF, the Council should bring its persuasive powers to bear on them, as must the international community as a whole, to convince them that this is a calling from which they cannot, and should not, turn away.

It is encouraging to note the steps being taken by the Interim Administration, in collaboration with the international community, to train a national army and a modern police force for Afghanistan. The importance of strengthening the capacity of the Interim Administration to build an indigenous, professionally trained security apparatus cannot be over-emphasized. In fact, it is also intrinsic to the exit strategy for the international security presence in Afghanistan.

The timely nomination of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga and the work it has carried out in the last 50 days, including its consultations with a cross-section of the Afghan population — not just in major towns, but also elsewhere — bodes well for a representative gathering which reflects the will and the wishes of the Afghan

people. We appreciate and commend the work done so far by the Commission. However, let me say a word of caution: fears have been expressed that the Taliban and its backers are attempting to subvert the process by insinuating themselves into it. We hope that the Commission will be alert to this and will ensure that the Taliban and its sympathizers, in any guise, will have no place in the emergency Loya Jirga.

The meeting in Tokyo in January of this year brought significant, although not sufficient, commitments for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. But to create circumstances in which the billions of dollars pledged can be productively utilized, millions are required now. The Secretary-General has eloquently brought out the Interim Administration's dire need for financial resources to pay the salaries of civil servants, without which the Interim Administration can neither extend and maintain its authority over the entire country nor deliver basic services, such as education and health care, to the Afghan people. It is therefore of paramount importance that the international community extend its unflinching help. The sense of hope that has been kindled in Afghanistan should not be allowed to be extinguished by a tardy or delayed response. Innovative approaches to cut through bureaucratic procedures are the need of the day.

Afghanistan's rehabilitation and reconstruction will take time, will need considerable resources and will need patience. But, once peace and security have been restored in Afghanistan, which we hope will soon be in the case, the arc lights of the media will no longer find this to be newsworthy. However, the international community must stay the course and not turn its back on Afghanistan. On its part, India is committed to extending assistance to Afghanistan over the long term, covering not just immediately required humanitarian assistance in the form of a million tons of wheat and much-needed medical aid, but also in sectors including police training, education, housing, human-resource development, public transport, information technology and industrial development. India has already extended a line of credit of $100 million. During Chairman Karzai's visit to India on 26 and 27 February, bilateral cooperation was discussed in detail. Our Prime Minister also announced a grant of $100 million for immediate utilization by the Afghan Government. We are ready to do more.

For its developmental efforts to be productive and lasting, the international community must match generosity with wisdom. It is therefore important to listen carefully to what the Afghans need and to respect their priorities and preferences, as no one knows better than the Afghan people what is good for them and how best to bring it about. The temptation to foist on them solutions or structures not suitable or responsive to the local environment should be resisted, as these will serve the cause of neither the donors nor the Afghans.

In determining what will work, sustainability should be the touchstone. We therefore strongly recommend that we do not lose sight of the least-developed-country perspective. We believe that emphasis on South-South cooperation in meeting the development needs of Afghanistan should be an integral part of the international community's strategy.

Women in Afghanistan were particularly traumatized by the Taliban and its brand of misogyny and obscurantism. Their role in rebuilding Afghanistan is central. We appreciate, and fully support, the efforts to increase the role and participation of women in the decision-making structures of the Interim Administration. A continued commitment to this norm will not just help in overcoming the harsh and inhuman practices of the Taliban against women, but will be a significant contribution towards building the bulwark of a more tolerant, participative democratic and forward-looking society.

Afghanistan suffered for long at the hands of the Taliban, which were foisted upon it from outside. The international community must work together to prevent such interference in the future and to stop Afghanistan from becoming a playground for the pursuit of narrow national interests or for re-enacting the Great Game with a new cast. The need, therefore, is for greater ownership, openness and transparency in the actions of the international community in Afghanistan. Outdated structures which failed to prevent conflict in Afghanistan in the past are unlikely to promote peace in the future. To persist with these may prove to be a costly triumph of hope over experience. The role of the Group of 21, which brings together in a cooperative framework a large number of countries with the ability to contribute towards peace and prosperity in Afghanistan, should be strengthened.

The United Nations has made a significant contribution in assisting the Interim Administration to

address the enormous challenges ahead of it. We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, with a light international footprint, to continue the engagement of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Brahimi richly deserves our deep appreciation and recognition for his outstanding contribution, first in fostering the Bonn Agreement, and then in so ably assisting the work of the Interim Administration. We wish him every success in his demanding endeavours and assure him of our full support.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate our prime concern. By all evidence, the Interim Administration is doing all it can to bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan. Is the international community matching this endeavour with the timely assistance that Afghanistan needs and deserves?

The President: I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to me.

There are still a number of speakers remaining on the list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I will suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 1.35 p.m.

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4497th meeting

Tuesday, 26 March 2002, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Petersen	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Ms. Tan
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-30465 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.35 p.m.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak before the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan. The reaction we witnessed today in this open debate clearly shows how preoccupied the international community is with the well-being of the Afghan people and with the need to find a lasting solution to the endless crises that beset that country.

Canadians are very concerned by the unstable humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the need to protect the Afghan civilian population, including persons internally displaced and refugees abroad.

The United Nations — in particular its representatives on the ground, under the guidance of Mr. Brahimi and Mr. Fisher — has shown enlightened leadership in its efforts to meet the challenges of governance, to respect security imperatives and cope with urgent humanitarian needs. We can only pay tribute to their leadership and urge them to persevere along this path.

(*spoke in English*)

We welcome the excellent report of the Secretary-General on the situation. It is clear, timely and detailed. The Interim Administration is laying important foundations for peace through building representative government structures, seeking to ensure the rule of law, promoting respect for human rights and looking to the implementation of sound economic policies. Much has been done in the first three months of the Administration, and while the task ahead is an onerous one, we congratulate the Interim Afghan Administration on the progress that it has made to date under very difficult circumstances. In particular, it is most gratifying to see that the schools are open and that the children are attending, including the girls.

The preparations for the emergency Loya Jirga in June will be key to installing a broadly representative administration to oversee the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The continuing work of the Special Commission is critical to its success, and we urge the Commission to ensure that the process remains equitable and transparent.

We are pleased that Afghan women are included in the Administration. We encourage the Administration and the United Nations to ensure that women are full partners in their respective decision-making processes and to ensure that resources are devoted to this important facet of the work. We say this not for reasons of political correctness, but for very, very practical reasons: old boys with old approaches will prolong the old problems, not generate new solutions. Let Afghanistan draw on the proven models, for example Turkey and Bangladesh, in involving women in public life and in the professions.

We urge that every effort be made to establish the independent human rights commission and the judicial commission called for in the Bonn Agreement. It is also important to continue to ensure that the civil service be transparent and that it represent all tribal and ethnic groups.

On the drug problem, the most recent poppy crop, due to be harvested in March, is another challenge. It is essential that the Interim Administration do what it can to reduce the incentives for poppy production and provide alternatives for farmers, including reformed rural credit systems. It goes almost without saying — but not quite — that the international community and the United Nations must support these particular efforts.

Canada is contributing to the stability and peace in Afghanistan in various ways, including military contributions to the coalition, direct support for the Interim Administration and the provision of additional humanitarian assistance and funds for longer-term reconstruction. Militarily, as part of the international efforts to ensure security, Canada has deployed 900 ground troops, plus or minus, to Afghanistan to work with the United States forces in Kandahar, through Operation Enduring Freedom. This brings the total Canadian contribution of forces to this Operation to something approximating 3,000.

As chair of the G-8 group of nations this year, Canada is also promoting discussions on the challenge of reintegration, disarmament and demobilization of Afghan soldiers. The G-8 Summit in Kananaskis will seek to address these issues and to catalyse support.

Financially, Canada's support for the Interim Administration is part of our ongoing commitment to the people of Afghanistan and to the long-term stability of that country. In January, we deposited with the

United Nations Development Programme our first $1.5 million contribution to support the Afghan Interim Authority Fund, and last week we announced a further contribution of $1.5 million to that Fund. That brings our total contribution to $3 million, an amount that is in addition to the $24 million in assistance that Canada has provided to Afghanistan during our current fiscal year, which ends in another week's time — $16 million since September. I think those figures are in Canadian dollars.

In the recent federal budget, Canada allocated a further $100 million for the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the region. Last week, the first $30.2 million of that commitment was allocated to United Nations agencies and other partners in support of activities such as demining, health, refugee integration, humanitarian assistance, education, security, peace-building and women's initiatives.

The United Nations clearly has the central coordinating role to play in the international support that is being offered to Afghanistan. Canada fully supports the leadership of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We welcome the recent appointments of Nigel Fisher and Jean Arnault as Deputy Special Representatives to assist Mr. Brahimi.

It is our hope that the proposed structure for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General will ensure a coordinated approach to this complex task. The United Nations role in channelling financial support and providing advice to the Interim Administration is key. It is essential that United Nations agencies work together in an efficient, effective and coordinated way. Effective coordination between the agencies and the mission's pillars will avoid duplication and ensure that every dollar of international assistance that is spent goes to benefit the Afghan people. Obviously, donor coordination is also important. The Interim Administration can, and should, play a critical role in programme development and in funding allocations.

Finally, let me convey a word of sympathy to the Afghan people with regard to the terrible earthquake tragedy that has afflicted them. It has caused terrible devastation, exactly not what the people of Afghanistan needed at this time.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I begin, as indeed I should, by applauding Norway for the quality of its leadership of the Security Council this month.

The earthquakes of yesterday and today have compounded the sorrows of Afghanistan. Bangladeshis, our Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, our Government and our people are profoundly saddened by the resultant death and destruction. Our deepest condolences go out to the Interim Authority and to the Afghan people.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2002/278), which is a blueprint for the United Nations role in post-conflict peace-building in Afghanistan. We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for elaborating on the mandate of the proposed United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

With the authorization of the Council, UNAMA would be entrusted to assume a great responsibility at a critical juncture in Afghan history. Beyond the borders of Afghanistan, its contribution would also be critical for Central Asia. It would help create a regenerated Afghanistan at peace with itself and with its neighbours, and free from external political and military interference. It would contribute to building institutions that would prevent threats to regional and international stability and security from emanating from its territory. From that perspective, Bangladesh supports the basic operating principles and tasks proposed for UNAMA. We shall try to contribute to the success of the mission in every possible way.

We shall now make a few specific suggestions for the consideration of the Council in authorizing the mandate of the proposed United Nations mission. First, with regard to security, it is only in an enabling environment that UNAMA can carry out its mandate. The core functions of the mission are drawn from the Bonn Agreement, which entrusts the United Nations with specific responsibilities. The Agreement sets a calendar. It is imperative that the United Nations mission be able to make progress in sequence.

It is reassuring to learn that arrangements are being made for a smooth transfer of leadership in the

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from the United Kingdom to Turkey; but the question of the expansion of the multinational Force remains unclear. There are views that since the formation and training of an Afghan army and an effective police force will take time, an expanded peacekeeping force remains essential for the stability of Afghanistan. Chairman Karzai has spoken about such a need before the Security Council. In that regard, we shall call for continued international engagement.

Secondly, with regard to support to the Interim Authority, Tokyo raised our hopes for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. There was considerable donor commitment. That is for the long-term; in the short-term, Chairman Karzai needs to keep his administrative machinery functioning. The Interim Authority urgently requires immediate financial support. It is needed even to pay the salaries of public servants. This is deserving of the attention of the international community. We have witnessed a similar situation fraught with risks in the Central African Republic.

Thirdly, with regard to the regional dimension, the emphasis accorded by the Secretary-General to inter-pillar coordination at the regional level is noteworthy. That coordination, we believe, will go beyond relief, recovery and reconstruction. It would also extend to political aspects, including those entrusted to pillar I of the proposed mission. Durable peace in Afghanistan can be envisaged only with the support and cooperation of regional actors. We place our full trust and confidence in Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi in that regard.

Fourthly, with regard to mine clearance and unexploded ordnance, as refugees and the internally displaced persons return, their access to livelihood, farms and orchards must be clear of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance. The reasons are both humanitarian and economic. We urge that priority attention be given to this area of special concern.

Fifthly, with regard to the coordination of programmes, the United Nations Development Programme has put forward a wide-ranging set of policy recommendations and operational imperatives at its workshop on learning from experience for Afghanistan, the last session of which was held at the Permanent Mission of Germany on 4 and 5 February. With respect to security, the recommendations included the expansion of the international security force beyond Kabul and assistance for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The operational recommendations include ensuring a seamless transition from humanitarian relief to recovery and reconstruction; addressing the poverty gap; a comprehensive approach to returnees; ensuring human security; the use of microcredit as a tool for development; and so on. The conclusions of the workshop merit serious consideration. Some of them should be integrated into the set of principles and tasks of UNAMA.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Bangladesh's willingness to participate effectively in the building and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Bangladesh, too, began as a war-ravaged economy, in 1971. Today it is widely viewed as a success story across a broad spectrum of sectors. This was done by a wise combination of good macro-economic policies and appropriate utilization of external support. We have sought to achieve all this against the matrix of commitment to human rights, good governance and pluralist values. This has rendered us what we are today: a vibrant, progressive, modernizing polity of 130 million that is also one of the largest democracies in the world. Our innovative ways of development through a partnership of Government and civil society attracted much interest last week in Monterrey. As Foreign Minister Morshed Khan pledged in Tokyo, we are prepared — indeed, anxious — to share our experience in microcredit, empowerment of women, poverty alleviation, education and health with the Afghan people, with whom we share warm and historic links. It is our vision that someday, Afghanistan will play a constructive role in the comity of nations. It shall be our endeavour, in concert with others in this Chamber and beyond, to transform that vision into reality.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tajikistan, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I should like to join the sincere expressions of deepest condolence and solidarity with the Government and people of friendly Afghanistan in connection with the devastating earthquake in the northern part of the

country, which has had tragic consequences, causing a great loss of human life.

Today's meeting of the Security Council, devoted to the consideration of the situation in Afghanistan, is of exceptional importance in giving new impetus to the peace process in that country after the fall of the inhuman Taliban regime. It is deeply symbolic that the Council is discussing this question under the able guidance of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, a country chairing the Afghanistan Support Group and playing an important role in the efforts of the international community to return Afghan society to peace, national reconciliation and stability.

The report of the Secretary-General, submitted to the Council today, not only gives a profound, objective and dispassionate analysis of the situation in Afghanistan, but also lays out clear guidelines for the participation of the United Nations in the post-conflict restoration of Afghanistan. The new role of the Organization is an extremely broad-based and responsible one. It provides for virtually all possible forms of United Nations assistance to a reborn Afghanistan and is designed to ensure that, with the active participation of all levels of Afghan society, we can carry out the extremely complex task of strengthening the peace process and not allowing it to go backwards.

It is obvious that the process of harmonizing Afghan society and establishing an atmosphere of tolerance and national reconciliation in the country will not be easy. In Tajikistan, which has recently undergone a dramatic period of civil conflict, we understand this well. We express to the friendly people of Afghanistan our unwavering support for the restoration of lasting peace and the rebirth of their country. President Emomali Rakhmonov has repeatedly supported the efforts of the Interim Administration and its head, Mr. Hamid Karzai. The Government of Tajikistan is deeply interested in ensuring that the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan is normalized as soon as possible and that a lasting political settlement is reached on the basis of national reconciliation.

Taking part in the expanding programmes of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and actively developing Tajik-Afghan cooperation in various spheres, Tajikistan is making its contribution to the strengthening of the peace process in that country. In accordance with a joint project developed with Russia, Afghanistan will receive electric energy from Tajikistan in the very near future. Our specialists are preparing for participation in the rebuilding and restoration of roads that will connect the north of the country with Kabul. There are also plans for a number of projects in the economic, scientific and cultural areas. Our cooperation is expanding in joint efforts of the international community to eliminate international terrorism, extremism and illicit drug trafficking.

We are convinced that only active interaction and multilateral cooperation with Afghanistan, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, increasing international assistance to the Afghan people, will help bring about the earliest possible rebirth of a peaceful, united, neutral and prosperous Afghan society. The resurgence of Afghan society, the restoration of peaceful life and the opening of schools and cultural and health care institutions for all Afghans, including women and children, give us great hope. The consistent implementation of the Bonn Agreement, including the active work of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, gives Afghanistan a unique chance to open a new chapter in its long history. It is extremely important, as the Secretary-General emphasized, that the political aspirations of individuals and groups be achieved peacefully and constructively, and not undermine trust in the process and its legitimacy. We believe that the lessons of the inter-Tajik settlement, achieved under the aegis of the United Nations, could be used at this critical turning point for Afghan society.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We in Tajikistan believe that, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and with the support of the world community and the Afghans themselves, the Mission will be able to carry out fully its lofty mandate.

The consistent and painstaking activities carried out by Ambassador Brahimi in the difficult social, political and humanitarian situation that developed in Afghanistan, and his personal courage, optimism and faith in the positive results of his peacekeeping mission deserve the highest praise. The Government of Tajikistan, which attaches great significance to the forthcoming activities of the Mission, will give it every type of support possible and is prepared to make its own contribution to the Mission's efforts to help the

Afghan people in their implementation of the peace process.

The President: I thank the representative of Tajikistan for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): It is with deep sorrow that we learned this morning about the devastating earthquakes that hit northern Afghanistan, whose death toll, according to reliable estimates, already approaches 5,000. We are short of words to describe the deep pain that we know our Afghan brothers are now enduring. Turkey will be taking part in the urgent task of assistance to the region.

We have already aligned ourselves with the statement made by Spain this morning on behalf of the European Union. I am here to explain, to a certain degree, Turkey's thinking with regard to the current situation in Afghanistan.

Not even four months have passed since the Interim Administration took office. After more than two decades of fighting that bore witness to the tragic events that befell this proud nation, a new era has begun in Afghanistan.

It is with satisfaction that we observe today the generally successful implementation of the Bonn Agreement. The support of the international community has been fundamental in this effort. That commitment remains vital to the success of the ongoing process. After all, security has not been fully ensured throughout the entire country. To be precise, I do not think that I can overemphasize the importance of maintaining the support of the international community under current conditions as we move towards the convening of the Loya Jirga.

We all hope that the convening of the Loya Jirga will constitute the first concrete step towards the establishment of a broad-based, representative political system in the country. This is clearly a critical threshold, and the Afghan people are looking to us, the international community, to help them in this important transitional phase. The permanent members of the Security Council in particular should impress upon the Afghan people their commitment to a smooth transition.

Long years of hardship and duress and the worst kind of fratricidal fighting all have taken their toll not only on the psyche of the Afghan people but also on the infrastructures that are essential to a functioning society. The country's great need for rehabilitation and reconstruction should be addressed forthwith. Agriculture, health and education are among the main problem areas that require urgent intervention.

There is a certain disillusionment today with the way reconstruction work is progressing. Understandably, the Afghan people are impatient. We need to find solutions quickly to many critical infrastructure problems, as these have a bearing on the security situation. We should be able to find ways to speed up the pace of reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Turkey has always wanted to see a modern administration in Afghanistan that would be in tune with the contemporary requirements of governing a country on the basis of stability, security and self-esteem, and this is also what we wish to see today. It was this vision and understanding that led Turkey to contribute effectively to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

With respect to the future leadership of ISAF, our authorities are engaged in a continuing dialogue with their British and American counterparts concerning a whole range of military and technical questions. The questions that are being dealt with are all very relevant to the continued success of the important operation in Afghanistan, and all of the concerned parties understand this.

We welcome the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General, which reflects the many concerns we have about Afghanistan. Needless to say, we will be heartily supporting the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the fulfilment of its mandate, and we think that it would be worthwhile to integrate the efforts of the United Nations into a single mission.

Besides our active involvement in ISAF, we will continue to contribute to the military training and to the equipment of the Afghan national army. We also stand ready to contribute to the establishment of an Afghan police force. Likewise, we will be contributing to the restructuring of State organs, including through the training of personnel and reconstruction work in the country.

In this context, I am happy to report here that 20 young Afghan diplomats have already started their training in Ankara, and that the first batch of medical doctors to receive internship training have arrived in Turkey.

We should never forget that we have embarked upon this journey with the Afghan people and for the Afghan people. As the Secretary-General rightly states, the process of healing has just started.

For reasons that are clear to all of us, the only option open to us in Afghanistan is success. Hence the commitment of the international community, including that of the permanent members of the Council; of the countries contributing to ISAF; and of Afghanistan's neighbours to this vision of success is, and will remain, essential in the days and months to come.

On the basis of this understanding, we believe that the current mandate of ISAF should be extended for another term. By the same token, such an expansion requires a very careful and multifaceted analysis, the necessary elements of which are not yet available.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Kazakhstan in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. Minister, we are happy to see you in New York presiding over our important meeting today. My delegation is pleased to participate, under your presidency, in a Council debate on Afghanistan. I wish also to thank Ambassador Kolby and his colleagues for scheduling this meeting.

Allow me to express my deepest sorrow and sympathy and to offer condolences to the people and the Government of Afghanistan in connection with the earthquake that struck last night and devastated part of that country, causing further damage and bringing more suffering to the Afghan people.

What the Afghan people have achieved in the short period of time since the collapse of the Taliban and the establishment of the Afghan Interim Government is remarkable. The process of the orderly transfer of power — which had had no precedent in Afghan society for centuries — provided a glimmer of hope at a time when chaos and pessimism reigned. Thus far, the combination of the determination demonstrated by the Afghans, coupled with the assistance rendered by the international community, has contributed to bringing about relative stability in a country that has not seen peace and tranquillity for 23 years. The relative peace prevailing in Kabul, given that city's national importance and the psychological impact that this may have on the rest of the country, is also an impressive achievement. Moreover, a peaceful and quiet environment is imperative in order for the Interim Government to function and to extend gradually its authority to the provinces.

There should be no doubt that the Afghan people — exhausted, impoverished and yearning for peace — were the driving force behind the ultimate collapse of the Taliban, and that it is they who have subsequently maintained the relative peace prevailing in the country, despite the suspicion and hostility among ethnic communities and political groups. We are witnessing the start of the healing process. At this point, the Afghan people and their leaders, as well as Afghanistan's neighbours and the international community as a whole, should be careful not to allow the process to reverse itself.

We agree, however, that the situation throughout the country remains fragile and unpredictable. Reports indicating that the Taliban and Al Qaeda elements are regrouping are a cause for concern. Given the fact that the Afghan political system is still at an early stage of its development, any challenge by the near-defunct Taliban and Al Qaeda could be all the more damaging. In the meantime, I would like to warn that callous military operations in which innocent Afghans are

killed and their villages destroyed are all the more damaging, too.

There is no doubt that the continuation of suspicion and hostility among Afghan military commanders provides a favourable ground in which the terrorists can operate. Mistrust and friction among these commanders may also result in eroding the most valuable asset: the support of the Afghan people for the peace process and the Interim Administration. Therefore, we believe that strengthening the Afghan peace process by taking on board and bringing along the competing local commanders is among the best remedial actions to strengthen the peace process.

We believe that the responsibility for ensuring security in Afghanistan ultimately rests with the Afghans themselves. Therefore, the creation of an indigenous Afghan security sector should be the top priority of all Afghans and the various components of such a security sector should be established as soon as possible. In the meantime, we understand that an appropriate dose of international assistance is necessary to helping maintain peace on the ground. We believe that, given the sensitivities of the Afghans and past experience, it is in the interest of lasting peace in Afghanistan that the foreign presence in that country remain as minimal and as brief as possible and necessary.

Opium poppy cultivation and trafficking in drugs in Afghanistan have always been among the main sources of financing for the war machine of criminal and terrorist forces in Afghanistan. The resumption of poppy cultivation in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan, as reported by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in February and echoed in the latest report of the Secretary-General, is a great cause for concern. Still fresh in our memory is how the profit derived from narcotics substantially fed the warmongering Taliban and terrorists harboured by them. Drug money can still largely benefit the remnant of Taliban and Al Qaeda elements in Afghanistan. There can also be no doubt that, in the current unstable Afghan environment, the production of and trafficking in narcotics are all the more destabilizing and can lead to further confrontation among the local commanders, on the one hand, and between them and the central Government, on the other.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country that has been engaged for years in a costly war against heavily armed drug traffickers on its eastern borders, is alarmed at the pre-assessment indicating the production of huge amounts of opium in Afghanistan this year. While UNDCP has pre-assessed that opium production is likely to be in the range of 1,900 to 2,700 tons this year, the estimate carried out by the relevant Iranian agency points to a larger production. For a variety of reasons, anti-narcotics activities should figure prominently on the agenda of the international community for Afghanistan. It is imperative that this illicit and inhumane business, of a complex and transnational nature, and the wide-ranging organized crime that it creates be dealt with decisively.

My Government commends and appreciates the determination and sense of purpose demonstrated by the Afghan Interim Administration in issuing a decree banning the cultivation, production, processing, use and trafficking of illicit drugs. Nonetheless, we understand that, in the circumstances, the Interim Administration needs the support of the international community in this area, without which the implementation of the decree would be almost impossible. We also welcome the plan to include in the new Afghan police force a strong and efficient drug-control unit. Iran has some experience in the crop substitution programme in Afghanistan and we are of the view that this is one of the effective ways of dealing efficiently with the issue. We hope that, in the forthcoming reports of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan, the issue of opium cultivation and drug trafficking will be adequately addressed and that the ways and means of combating the scourge of drugs emanating from Afghanistan, especially the ways in which the international community could assist, will be further elaborated.

To help stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, it is essential that Afghanistan's neighbouring countries build consensus and agree among themselves on how to contribute to the peace process in that country and to strengthen the Afghan Interim Authority. The holding of the first meeting of the "six-plus-two" group in Kabul on 11 March, with the Foreign Minister of the Interim Administration in attendance, is a welcome development. We believe that the inclusion of Afghanistan in these discussions opens a new and hopeful chapter in the dialogue to restore regional peace and stability. We look forward to seeing the

group meet regularly and become more active. The Islamic Republic of Iran, viewing the return of stability and normalcy to Afghanistan as in its self-interest, has already taken some steps to encourage cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbours, especially with regard to necessary actions to be taken to rebuild Afghanistan.

Iranian officials, consistent in their policy, have done their best to help the Afghans to stabilize and rebuild their country and hosted Chairman Karzai during his recent three-day State visit to Tehran. This visit was successful in providing an opportunity to the two countries' high-ranking officials to renew the historic friendly relations between the two nations and to lay the groundwork for the close involvement of Iran in rebuilding Afghanistan. During this visit, five agreements on wide-ranging cooperation between the two parties were signed.

Despite the porous nature of our long eastern borders, the Iranian Government has spared no efforts in recent months in denying Taliban and Al Qaeda elements entry into Iranian territory and the possibility of turning it into a staging ground for regrouping and re-entering Afghanistan. A number of Afghans and other foreign nationals who illegally and directly or indirectly entered Iranian territory over the past few months have been detained by Iranian law enforcement agencies. Some have already been handed over to their Governments; in the case of some others, their relevant Governments have yet to take action to receive them. We have also managed to pass on the names of these individuals to the Secretary-General. Likewise, the Iranian Government has also taken effective measures to ban any activities by Afghan nationals on Iranian soil against the Afghan Interim Administration. The measures include, among other actions, the expulsion of some Afghan activists from Iran.

As Mr. Karzai admitted in his address to the Iranian Parliament during his visit to Iran, the presence of millions of Afghan refugees in Iran for two decades has been a burden on Iranians' shoulders. We hope that the ongoing dialogue between the Afghan Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on a programme for the voluntary return of refugees will lead in the near future to the start of an effective programme to that end.

Peace in Afghanistan was for centuries based on ethnic and religious harmony and the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious communities. Coups, occupation and civil war broke that harmony and, hence, shattered the peace. We believe that fostering understanding among various segments of Afghan society is an effective way to restore lasting peace and to deprive the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda of a breeding ground. In this context, while we greatly appreciate the initiative taken by Chairman Karzai to participate in and address a gathering in Kabul on the occasion of the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the Third Imam of Shiites, we are very concerned about reports in the north about harassment of Pashtuns by other ethnic groups.

In closing, I wish to reiterate my Government's position on the need for the United Nations to continue its central and crucial role in assisting the Afghans to stabilize and rebuild their country. I commend the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and their colleagues in the Secretariat and the whole United Nations system for the latest comprehensive report and detailed proposed structure for a United Nations presence in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready, where necessary, to extend its assistance to the United Nations to establish its new structure on the ground.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): May I join others in expressing our condolences to the delegation of Afghanistan on the tragic earthquake that has struck their country very recently. I might also thank Norway for convening this open debate, which we consider a very timely initiative.

New Zealand welcomes the progress that has been made in bringing Afghanistan back into the community of nations. Without the tireless efforts of the United Nations, in particular those of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, the landmark Bonn Agreement and the installation of the Interim Administration in Kabul, this would not have been possible. While the situation clearly remains fragile and dangerous, we should acknowledge at the outset the important steps that have been taken in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan. With the continued help of the international community, we hope that the

Afghan people will be enabled to secure a more peaceful and prosperous future.

The next major step in the programme foreseen in the Bonn Agreement will be the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga in June. In the period leading up to that very significant date, we expect that the Interim Administration will step up its programme of integrating the work of regional and provincial authorities with its own. High on the agenda for the new governing structure should be the establishment of the commissions on judicial affairs and human rights, including the rights of women.

For its part, the United Nations is seeking to bring together its own functions in Afghanistan under the proposed United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). New Zealand very much welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals in his report for the structure and functioning of UNAMA and this first use of the concept of an integrated mission task force. When implemented, it will certainly stand as a tribute to Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, who proposed the concept when he was the United Nations special adviser on peacekeeping.

In its response to the crisis in Afghanistan, New Zealand has sought to provide effective emergency assistance to the Afghan people. Our initial response to the crisis was focused on the urgent humanitarian needs of refugees who reached our shores. We subsequently made a contribution of one million New Zealand dollars to the United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan and have provided a quarter of a million New Zealand dollars for New Zealand non-governmental organizations to assist their work in Afghanistan.

At the Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, New Zealand pledged that we would remain engaged in the international aid effort to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have followed up this pledge by announcing in the past week a further contribution of 600,000 New Zealand dollars for reconstruction efforts. New Zealand's contribution to these reconstruction efforts will be directed to projects identified in the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People and through a further allocation towards New Zealand non-governmental organization activities in Afghanistan.

These contributions demonstrate New Zealand's firm commitment to support the Afghan Interim Authority and the Afghan people in their reconstruction efforts after nearly two decades of tragic war and upheaval. We stand ready to play our part in the reconstruction effort in partnership with the international community and with the Afghan people.

Clearly, a critical element for achieving a lasting peace is a successful demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme. New Zealand experience, particularly in the Pacific, suggests that this programme should be integrated into the mission and addressed as part of the wider political process. Finding alternative activities for former combatants will be crucial.

New Zealand has also contributed personnel to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and is the only country outside Europe so far to do so. In doing this, we have demonstrated a commitment to Afghanistan's stability and security. In the event that a decision is made to extend the mandate of ISAF beyond Kabul, New Zealand hopes that additional countries will join in the security operation. Only in stable and secure conditions will the personnel assigned by UNAMA to the seven regional centres outside Kabul be able to function effectively. New Zealand has long pressed for adequate measures to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel. In our view, the safety of UNAMA's regional personnel, as well as that of the Afghan population outside Kabul, needs to be taken into account in decisions on the future role and scope of ISAF.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kazakhstan, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, on behalf of my Government, I would like to express the most sincere condolences to the people and Government of Afghanistan on the earthquake, which has resulted in great loss of life.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Frechette, for her excellent submission of the Secretary-General's report on the item under consideration.

We support the major observations and conclusions of the report, and we share the Secretary-General's optimism with regard to the fact that, in spite

of the destruction of infrastructure and the great loss of life resulting from decades of war, Afghans representing all strata of society are prepared to take upon themselves the responsibility for the restoration of their long-suffering country. This thesis is confirmed by the activities of the Interim Administration, headed by Mr. Karzai, whose legitimacy is thus affirmed at the international level and within the country. Under his leadership, and in close cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Brahimi, a rehabilitation process in post-conflict Afghanistan is under way.

In Afghan society, there are positive changes taking place. There has been a successful conclusion of the campaign to return Afghan children to school. On 23 March, the new school year saw 1.5 million girls and boys sitting at their school desks. A Special Independent Commission for the Emergency Loya Jirga has done significant work, working out rules and procedures that pertain to the holding of a pan-national conference of elders. In the near future, we expect the establishment of a human rights commission. A national seminar in Kabul on human rights is an important step in the achievement of the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, which pertains to human rights.

At the same time, we note the continuing problem of ensuring security in the region. On the whole, the lack of security is leading to understandable concern on the part of the population of Afghanistan. Beyond Kabul, there is inter-ethnic conflict, skirmishes are taking place between political groups that are trying to establish their own influence, crime is persisting and the remaining Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters are destabilizing the already fragile peace in the region.

All of these factors show that there is a need for responsible measures to maintain the peace process. We agree with the Secretary-General about the need to extend the presence of the International Security Assistance Force, which is currently in Kabul, to other major cities, since the main threat to the Interim Administration is from the provinces, and there is a real possibility that, as the convening of a Loya Jirga approaches, that threat will increase.

Furthermore, the multinational forces are a temporary element. In connection with the Bonn Agreement, responsibility for ensuring security lies with the Afghan people themselves. In this context, we are encouraged by steps undertaken by the United States, Germany and other participants in the anti-terrorist coalition to establish a combat-ready national army and police force in Afghanistan for the maintenance of law and order. In order for these very important measures to be implemented in Afghanistan, we need further effective international support to ensure the proper conditions for future Afghan military forces.

From the very outset, the Government of Kazakhstan supported the appointment of Mr. Brahimi as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the region. In our view, the format proposed for the United Nations presence in Afghanistan — the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, headed by Lakhdar Brahimi — will promote the successful conclusion of the peace process. We believe that the components that have been proposed will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the comprehensive rehabilitation of Afghan society.

Kazakhstan has always advocated the need for the earliest possible settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. Now, as the peace settlement process is entering the practical phase, Kazakhstan will work to take part in the political and economic phases of the international community's activities aimed at restoring Afghan society.

My Government is successfully cooperating with the World Food Programme, through which Kazakhstan is delivering to Afghanistan approximately 94,000 tons of grain, worth $12 million. We are also preparing for the possible participation of the Kazakhstan peacekeeping battalion in international forces to assist security efforts in Afghanistan.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Afghanistan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Minister, for coming here from Oslo to preside over this meeting on Afghanistan. We appreciate Norway's important humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan during these difficult times.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council, for having convened this timely meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. In addition, I express sincere thanks to those representatives who expressed their sympathies for the

devastating earthquake that took place in the village of Nahrin, located east of Baghlan and south of Kunduz.

I would also like to express my profound appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his comprehensive report on Afghanistan dated 18 March 2002. We consider this report as reflecting the series of positive developments that have taken place since the demise of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Fortunately, in the recent report we do not see any accounts indicating gross violation of human rights, systematic massacre and deportation of the civilian population based on ethnic origin. Rather, the recent report sets out positive developments characterized by the restoration of human rights, in particular the rights of women, the reopening of educational institutions for boys and girls, the return of women to the civil service, and the continued efforts by the Afghan people, in coordination with the international community, to recover and to reconstruct Afghanistan's economic, political and cultural infrastructure. Those are the reasons why we consider that this report reflects the optimism and hope of the Afghan people.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the recent changes regarding the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We are convinced that this new structure comes at a time when the consolidation of peace and reconstruction is of the utmost importance, given the current situation in Afghanistan.

In this context, it is relevant to stress the tireless and persistent efforts of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the two newly appointed deputies, Mr. Nigel Fisher and Mr. Jean Arnault. We know both of them, and we value their experience and ability to perform their challenging assignments.

The formation of a national army and a police force remains a vital priority for the Interim Administration. The formation of a national army will serve as a symbol of national unity. The Interim Administration greatly appreciates the assistance of Member States in implementing that objective.

I would like to reiterate that the Interim Administration remains strictly committed to the implementation of the landmark Agreement signed in Bonn on 5 December 2001.

We are looking forward to convening of the Loya Jirga on 22 June 2002, which will lead to the establishment of the Transitional Authority.

With regard to the extension of the International Security Assistance Force —ISAF —beyond the capital, to which some delegates referred in today's meeting, we consider it imperative that the views of the Afghan Interim Administration should be sought.

In conclusion, I would like to make it clear that, in any political gathering or meeting of Afghans with regard to the future political destiny of Afghanistan, including the Loya Jirga, there should be no place for the Taliban and their supporters, whatever their denomination. Those who were stooges of foreign forces and brought havoc to the Afghan nation, violated basic human rights and committed atrocities against Afghans are considered as traitors and terrorists who have harboured international terrorists. They should not be entitled to be part of any political set-up in Afghanistan.

Afghan authorities consider that the 18 March 2002 report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan deserves to be endorsed by this Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Afghanistan for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, to respond to comments and questions raised.

The Assistant Secretary-General: On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would first like to thank all those who have spoken today for their encouraging words of support. It has been especially gratifying to hear unanimous support for the Secretary-General's proposals of a new United Nations mission in Afghanistan. I will also be sure to transmit to Mr. Brahimi your sustained confidence in his important work.

I noted very few specific questions. The representative of the United Kingdom did, however, ask whether the Secretariat foresaw a role in Afghanistan for the Internally Displaced Persons Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Unit, which is based in Geneva, has already deployed an assessment mission to areas in Afghanistan with a high concentration of internally displaced persons. The mission's report is being

finalized, and its recommendations will be discussed in the coming days.

Whatever programmes emerge from these recommendations will be integrated into pillar II of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). On this point, I would like to underline that the concept of integration will allow the specific problem of internally displaced persons to be addressed with solutions that take into account and build on other development activities and the reconstruction of the country as a whole.

I focus on the integration, because it is at the heart of the Secretary-General's concept of UNAMA, which in turn represents an original model for a complex United Nations mission. The central idea is to have a coherent mission structure in which all aspects are carefully integrated with each other. The concept of integration is particularly important for human rights, which has been mentioned by a number of delegations today. In an integrated mission, the human rights mandate will not be the responsibility of a single office, but will be an integral part of activities carried out within various elements of both pillars.

While I would like to assume that the lack of questions reflects a general satisfaction with the direction that the United Nations has taken in Afghanistan, I do not take this as a sign of complacency. At the same time, I have duly taken note of a number of concerns that have been raised, including the question of narcotics. And I assure you that these concerns will also be conveyed to Mr. Brahimi, as well as to other relevant parts of the United Nations system.

Before concluding, I feel that it is important to reiterate that we must not become complacent. The earthquake last night reminded us of how vulnerable Afghanistan remains to the forces of nature. Our own analysis and numerous news reports continue to remind us that Afghanistan is equally vulnerable to human forces.

On this point I would like to stress an issue raised by a good number of delegations, and that is the importance of security. I welcome the strong support for the extension of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) past June and hope that the Council will take action to bring that about. I also wholeheartedly agree with the representative of the United Kingdom when he calls for an expansion of the ISAF effect beyond Kabul, and I look forward to further suggestions and specific ideas of how to bring this effect of ISAF beyond Kabul into being.

Finally, we cannot afford to become complacent about the need to provide support — financial support in particular — for the Interim Administration, the Loya Jirga process and humanitarian reconstruction and development activities. The Interim Administration Fund run by the United Nations Development Programme, which has allowed Mr. Karzai's Government to function with some success, urgently needs replenishment if the Administration is to keep its commitments until June.

In this regard, let me say, Mr. Minister, that it is a particular privilege to have this meeting under your presidency, as the Government of Norway not only chairs the Afghanistan Support Group, but is also one of the largest and most consistent contributors to the Interim Administration Fund, as well as to other humanitarian assistance efforts in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, let me restate my gratitude for the support shown today by Council members and non-members alike, for the Secretary-General's proposal regarding the mandate and structure of UNAMA and for the work that the United Nations has accomplished so far in Afghanistan. I look forward to the draft resolution that will be submitted tomorrow on the establishment of the new Mission.

The President: I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for the clarifications and answers he has provided and for the kind words he has addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4498

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4498th meeting

Wednesday, 27 March 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kolby	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Rivas
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-30603 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Spain and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Čović (Yugoslavia) took a seat at the Council table and Mr. Arias (Spain) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. After the briefing, I shall open the floor to members.

I now give the floor to Mr. Annabi.

Mr. Annabi: I am pleased to provide an update on developments in Kosovo since Council members were last briefed, on 25 February.

This month has been a busy one for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), with progress made on the priority issues outlined to the Council during the last briefing. The most notable achievements were the formation of a Government after several months of deadlock and the transfer to Kosovo yesterday of the remaining known Kosovo Albanian prisoners held in Serbian jails.

UNMIK's efforts to foster political agreement between the three major Kosovo Albanian parties culminated on 28 February in an agreement to form a coalition Government headed by Mr. Bajram Rexhepi of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). The same agreement put forward Mr. Ibrahim Rugova of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) as President and assigned four ministries to the LDK and two each to the PDK and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK).

Council members will recall that, in addition to this division of ministries under the coalition agreement, the Constitutional Framework reserves one ministry to the Kosovo Serbs and one ministry to another minority community. This latter ministry has been filled by a member of the Bosniac/Gorani VATAN coalition, which has four seats in the Assembly.

Unfortunately, however, the Kosovo Serb Return Coalition (Povratak) has not thus far put forward a ministerial candidate. Nevertheless, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Steiner, hopes that this can happen shortly. He welcomed the fact that on 28 February, when the agreement on the coalition Government was reached, Mr. Čović — whom we are happy to see with us today — in an interview with the Serbian media, stated that he was encouraged by the agreement, which guaranteed an equal approach to all communities in Kosovo, and that Povratak expected at least one post in the future Government of Kosovo.

The coalition agreement was endorsed on 4 March by more than a two-thirds majority of the Kosovo Assembly. Kosovo Serb Assembly members

participated in the vote, although they voted to abstain. The approval of the agreement voted in the President of Kosovo, the Prime Minister and the Ministers nominated by the parties. Two remaining Assembly presidency members put forward by the PDK were endorsed by a separate vote, bringing the full complement of that body to nine members.

Shortly before the Assembly meeting, allegations of a serious nature were made against Prime Minister-designate Rexhepi. These allegations were investigated by UNMIK police and by KFOR, and were found to be not substantiated.

These accusations were not considered helpful in building inter-communal trust and a workable relationship between all communities in the provisional institutions of self-government.

Following the Assembly's endorsement of the President and the Government, both President Rugova and Prime Minister Rexhepi made statements to the press on several issues, including the issue of independence. Mr. Steiner spoke with both Mr. Rugova and Mr. Rexhepi shortly after the statements were made, underlined to them that such remarks were not helpful and emphasized that Kosovo's provisional institutions of self-government must concentrate on those areas transferred to them by the Constitutional Framework.

As I mentioned, the Return Coalition has not yet nominated a candidate for its reserved Ministry — the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. It has, in fact, now conditioned its participation in the Government on the allocation of one extra ministry to the Kosovo Serbs — the Ministry of Returns, an area that is reserved for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General under the Constitutional Framework. Mr. Steiner has sought to accommodate the wishes of the Kosovo Serbs and to encourage their constructive engagement through creative alternatives to the establishment of an actual ministry.

He met with the Return Coalition on 19 March and offered a package that includes the creation of the position of Assistant Minister for the Coordination of Returns and Community Affairs within the Office of the Prime Minister. Mr. Steiner also offered the creation of an advisory post for the Kosovo Serbs in UNMIK's Office of Returns and Communities. The Return Coalition was encouraged by Mr. Steiner to appoint a qualified Kosovo Serb to their designated Ministry and not to overlook the opportunity for participation in the civil service, where hundreds of posts for qualified Kosovo Serbs remain to be filled. We very much hope that the Return Coalition will resolve their internal difficulties and take Mr. Steiner up on the offer he has made to them. It would indeed be a great shame if, after all the efforts that have been made on all sides, the Kosovo Serbs were to deny themselves the opportunity of participating in the Government.

Mr. Steiner again met with the Return Coalition yesterday, 26 March, to continue the discussion on Kosovo Serb participation in the Government. In response to the Coalition's insistence on creating an extra-institutional ministerial portfolio on returns, Mr. Steiner explained that this was contrary to the Constitutional Framework. Not only is there no legal basis for a ministry to be created outside the provisional Government, the issue of return is a special responsibility of the international community and falls under the reserved powers of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and therefore it cannot be delegated to the institutions of self-government. The Special Representative intends actively to continue his efforts to engage the Kosovo Serbs in the Government institutions and to find a solution within the Constitutional Framework. Mr. Steiner would, of course, welcome the Council's support in this regard.

Now that a Government has been formed, the transfer of authority has begun. The transitional departments have been transformed into ministries, and the provisional institutions of self-government must now get down to the actual business of governing. The Government first met on 15 March and again on 22 March and was urged by Prime Minister Rexhepi to work together for all of Kosovo's communities. The discussion focused on the priorities of each Ministry, with the aim of drawing up a Government plan. Ministries are currently working on establishing their offices and on recruiting members of the civil service, including members of minority communities. Mr. Rexhepi and some of his Ministers have already met with representatives of international financial institutions and with donors to urge continued support for Kosovo.

On 20 March Mr. Steiner and the Commander of KFOR, General Valentin, had lunch with the President

of Kosovo, the Prime Minister and the President of the Assembly. It was agreed that this format, which has been dubbed the "2+3", will be used on a regular basis to address policy issues and to solve problems in an informal manner.

Members of the Kosovo Assembly are being trained through the Assembly Support Initiative, set up by the institution-building pillar of UNMIK, to provide training in areas such as legislative ethics and oversight of the executive. UNMIK is also encouraging the strong interest shown by members of Kosovo's civil society in starting a dialogue with the provisional institutions of self-government. On 7 March key non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders agreed to work with the institution-building pillar to establish an advisory board of NGO leaders to strengthen the NGO role in the legislative and policy-making process.

A key priority in the economic sector is the creation of jobs. The high level of unemployment, particularly among young people — it still stands at 50 per cent — constitutes a potential threat to the stability of Kosovo. Privatization is seen as an important means of generating economic development, and UNMIK is working hard to establish a favourable environment in which this can go forward.

The overall security situation has improved over the last month, and the murder rate is declining. Between 1 January and 11 March of this year, there were 16 murders in Kosovo. If that rate — although it is still high — continues, UNMIK police expect the number of murders this year to be lower than in the last two years, when, in comparison, we had, unfortunately, 250 murders in 2000 and 136 in 2001.

Attacks on minority communities continued, however, although less frequently in some regions than in previous months. A heavy police presence, curfews in trouble spots and several arrests have had an impact on the crime situation. Overall, UNMIK considers that freedom of movement has improved, particularly in the Gnjilane area, where there appeared to be more independent movement of Kosovo Serbs throughout the region.

The new UNMIK Police Commissioner, Mr. Stefan Feller from Germany, took up his duties on 15 March. Mr. Feller, as members of the Council may know, is no newcomer to the Mission — he served as Deputy Police Commissioner until May of last year. We welcome the continuity of experience that his appointment will bring to the Mission.

An important initiative under way at the moment is the second weapons amnesty, which began on 15 March and will continue until 15 April. This is the second weapons amnesty that KFOR and UNMIK police have run. The Council may recall that the first was last June, just before Regulation 2001/7, on the Authorization of Possession of Weapons in Kosovo, entered into force. This second amnesty coincides with the formation of the Government, which, in its first official meeting on 15 March, lent its full support to the effort to reduce the number of weapons in circulation in Kosovo.

Progress has been made in the fight against organized crime through the promulgation on 18 March of Regulation 2002/6, on Covert and Technical Measures of Surveillance and Investigation. This regulation is designed to enhance the investigative and prosecutorial capacity with regard to organized crime cases by enabling the police and prosecutors to use various types of covert activity. Another important step forward was the establishment at the end of February of a unit within the Department of Justice to deal with sensitive information and operations. One of the important functions of this unit will be to transform intelligence into evidence that can be used in a court of law.

On returns, UNMIK's Office of Returns and Communities is currently planning returns to 25 different locations throughout Kosovo. Local and regional working groups are meeting regularly throughout Kosovo to develop consensus among all stakeholders — including the majority Kosovo Albanian community — regarding returns, and to plan specific projects. A comprehensive damage assessment of 66 potential return locations has now been completed. Damage to property and related infrastructure was found to be severe and will require considerable financial assistance for reconstruction efforts.

An important part of the planning process for returns is, of course, confidence-building measures aimed at promoting reconciliation and a climate conducive to return. Several reconciliation projects are under way in mixed municipalities, such as Kamenica, where a multi-ethnic youth project has been launched, and in Strpce. The institution-building pillar of

UNMIK has also brought together Kosovo Albanian civil society representatives and non-governmental organizations from Serbia to develop civic dialogue and build trust. A similar exercise was carried out by bringing Kosovo Albanian journalists to visit Belgrade media outlets with a view to promoting understanding and cooperation.

A comprehensive returns package includes not only preparing the ground for returns, but creating effective mechanisms to allow the concerned communities to participate in the process. Mr. Steiner hopes that this inclusive approach that he has offered the Kosovo Serbs will be accepted, as the active participation of all communities is key to a successful returns process.

The Special Representative has stressed that cooperation with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue to be defined by the Common Document through the High-Ranking Working Group. The past month has seen a great deal of activity in the two sub-groups of the High-Ranking Working Group dealing with police and judicial cooperation respectively.

Lengthy negotiations between UNMIK and Mr. Čović culminated, happily, yesterday, in the transfer to Kosovo of 146 Kosovo Albanian detainees from Serbia. The initial figure stated was 153, but during the process of preparing the transfer it was learned that 7 of them had previously been released. Mr. Steiner is very satisfied that all known Albanian detainees who wanted to return to Kosovo have now been able to do so. The transfer was preceded by the handing over by the Serbian authorities of the court files relating to the majority of the remaining detainees.

Those files were reviewed by officials in UNMIK's Department of Justice, including by international judges. The judicial review determined that a significant number of detainees had convictions that were legally invalid, and this information was communicated to the Serbian authorities. Accordingly, the majority of the prisoners, most of whom had convictions relating to activities during the Kosovo conflict, were released within 24 hours of their return to Kosovo. A smaller number of detainees were found to have valid convictions, and they will serve out their sentences in Kosovo. The case files for the remaining detainees were incomplete, and those detainees will continue to be held until their records are located or until a determination can be made that their records cannot be found.

A further step forward in cooperation was the first joint visit — on 13 March — to an alleged illegal detention centre in Kosovo, pursuant to the Protocol on Joint Verification Teams on Hidden Prisons. The visit confirmed that the site was, in fact, a mental institute administered by the Department of Health.

Turning to relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Steiner met with President Trajkovski in Skopje on 18 March. The visit yielded two important agreements. The first related to the establishment of a joint expert committee to address the practical situation on the ground resulting from the border demarcation Agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Government of Kosovo has lent its full support to Mr. Steiner's efforts to reduce tensions in the border area by addressing these practical problems, and expressed a willingness to participate in the planned joint expert committee.

Secondly, agreement was reached on the need to initiate police cooperation with the objective of establishing a memorandum of understanding to deal with overall crime prevention and the fight against organized crime.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, as Council members can see, the six weeks since Mr. Steiner arrived in Kosovo on 14 February have been rather busy. His familiarization with the mission and the main local actors on the ground has led him to conclude that, in order for the nascent Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to focus on the tasks ahead and for UNMIK to have a clear road-map for itself, a joint set of benchmarks is needed to act as a set of target objectives in key areas. Work is under way to identify what realistic benchmarks can be set, and we will keep the Council informed of progress.

I am sure that the Council will join UNMIK in welcoming in particular the news that the Kosovo Albanian detainees have now been transferred to Kosovo. This has been an emotionally charged issue that has been an obstacle to reconciliation since UNMIK was established in Kosovo. We hope that the resolution of this matter in a way that upholds the rule of law, together with UNMIK's continued commitment to determining the fate of the missing persons, will boost inter-communal cooperation as Kosovo's

Government gets down to the hard work of provisional self-government.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

Mr. Čović (Yugoslavia) (*spoke in Serbian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Before I begin my comments on Kosovo, I would like to give the Council a brief update on the situation in southern Serbia; I have prepared a more detailed written briefing for review. Thanks to the support and assistance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), KFOR and many of the countries represented here on a bilateral basis, we are continuing to consolidate the reconciliation process in southern Serbia. To this end, I would like to list some of the most recent confidence-building measures in this process.

Over 345 new recruits, including 213 ethnic Albanians and 23 women, have gone through OSCE-assisted training and been assigned in southern Serbia as multi-ethnic police. The Serbian Government spent more than $16,882,000 on various infrastructure projects in 2001 and plans to spend a further $10,000,000 this year. This is in addition to the considerable assistance provided by other countries. Municipal elections are scheduled for 15 or 16 June. We have withdrawn 12,282 special unit soldiers from the region as peace has been restored. There is full freedom of movement and security. The integration of representatives of the ethnic Albanian and Roma communities into State institutions has been intensified. Amnesty and abolition have been fully implemented. The army units will be withdrawn from the school building in Bujanovac and the shoe factory in Presevo by 15 April. 8,982 internally displaced ethnic Albanians have returned to their homes in southern Serbia, while document problems for the Albanians have been resolved to allow their diplomas and other certificates issued in Kosovo and Metohija to be fully recognized.

More remains to be done, however. We must continue to improve the infrastructure, particularly for returning refugees and internally displaced persons, and we must increase employment possibilities for everyone. We need the Council's continued help on these and other issues.

I wish to touch briefly on Macedonia. I have been in frequent touch with the leaders of Macedonia and given them advice and encouragement based on the model we developed together for southern Serbia.

Turning to Kosovo and Metohija, the most important point that I wish to make is that we are currently in a race against time. Two different forces are going to be pushing harder and harder to come to a final solution for Kosovo and Metohija: the ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija and, for separate reasons, the international community, which is growing tired of investing resources and energy in the Balkans. If this last statement should be doubted, one need only consider the sharp reduction in refugee funding for the Balkans for next year or the statements made by various troop contributors about withdrawing all or part of their forces.

I firmly believe that we have less time than most of us think or want to prepare for this final solution, so every day counts. I personally think that, unless we make major progress on key issues this very year, we will face immense problems.

There are two basic interrelated tasks in Kosovo and Metohija: building institutions and building a true multi-ethnic society. For obvious reasons, I am going to concentrate more on the latter than on the former in my remarks, though both are crucial to real success.

Unlike the situation of ethnic groups in Bosnia, the Serbs of Kosovo have been given absolutely no assurance whatsoever that their language, culture, religion or way of life will definitely survive and flourish in Kosovo and Metohija. Quite to the contrary, everything really depends on the prevailing whim or good will of UNMIK and KFOR, with absolutely no assurance for the future. This is an absolutely critical flaw, because nothing that the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija are now seeing can give them any comfort at all about their future. Freedom of movement outside of a few enclaves is totally impossible, refugee return is almost non-existent and a climate of violence permeates the very air that the Serbs breathe. There are those who will say that the situation is improving. They

should not be believed. The Serbs and other minorities have simply learned the rules of the game and how to stay out of harm's way.

In November 2001, I signed with then Special Representative Haekkerup a Common Document outlining how we would work together to improve the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. I believe that the key to our common future is to fully implement that agreement in good faith and with as much energy as possible. This includes making a major push this year on refugee return; confronting extremists on all sides; insisting that there be real freedom of movement throughout Kosovo and Metohija; working hard to make the institutions work; and trying to account for the missing on both sides.

As I speak here today, virtually all of the remaining 146 Albanian prisoners from Kosovo and Metohija who were transferred from Kosovo prisons in the last days of the war to Serbia proper are on their way to UNMIK in an agreement worked out with UNMIK. A companion agreement will allow Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija who were arrested after 5 October 2000 in Serbia proper to apply to serve out their sentences in Kosovo and Metohija and Serbs who were arrested and convicted in Kosovo and Metohija to apply to serve out their sentences in Serbia proper. This removes one of the key issues that has long been cited as a block to genuine reconciliation between the ethnic groups in Kosovo and Metohija. I hope that proves to be the case.

I am here today to ask for the Council's help in moving forcefully to create a true multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija. The stakes are very high. In Yugoslavia and Serbia, we are trying hard to overcome the legacy of the past and to move towards a democratic, market-oriented society, taking its rightful place in the European Union. We face immense challenges, however, from the legacy of problems left behind by Slobodan Milosevic, including a failed economy, the Kosovo and Metohija issue, coming to terms with our past and with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and the Montenegro question. If we are not successful in creating a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija, the resulting turmoil and dislocation will have a dramatic negative impact on the political situation in Yugoslavia. At the very least, it will shift the focus from economic, democratic, nation-building issues to nationalism. At worst, it could well return to power those forces of darkness and despair that ruled over my country for far too long.

But as difficult and dangerous as that scenario may be, it is in fact just as bad, or even worse, for the future of Kosovo and Metohija. If extremist groups there are allowed to prevail, the real losers will be all the citizens of Kosovo and Metohija. Those same extremist groups that bomb buses carrying Serbs are also killing other Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija who do not share their extremism. What sort of society will result if the extremists prevail? What sort of relationship can they expect to have with Serbia if they drive the local Serbs out of Kosovo and Metohija? Believe me, for Kosovo and Metohija to survive and flourish economically, it must have a positive, constructive relationship with the rest of Yugoslavia. Otherwise it will continue in perpetuity to rely on the generosity of the international community.

Finally, let me say a word about the relationship today between Belgrade and the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. There are those, including many in the international community, who would prefer to build a five-metre-high wall around the boundary of Kosovo and Metohija with the rest of Yugoslavia, the theory being that the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija must learn to live entirely within Kosovo and Metohija. That same theory seems, by the way, to prejudge the future of Kosovo and Metohija by ensuring that it would be totally independent of the rest of Yugoslavia.

Let me say more with sadness than with anger that if those members of the international community continue to build that wall they will certainly succeed, because they undoubtedly have the power to do so. But virtually all the Serbs now in Kosovo and Metohija will be on the other side of that wall in Yugoslavia and Serbia, both putting enormous social pressures on us and creating the very poisonous situation in Kosovo and Metohija which I described earlier.

Unless and until the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija feel secure in their position in Kosovo and Metohija and are free from violence and certain that their children will have full opportunities to speak their language, practice their religion and travel freely, they will want a lifeline to Serbia itself, as normal people anywhere would.

We in the Coordinating Centre have demonstrated, by the get-out-the-vote campaign and now on the Kosovo Albanian prisoner issue, that we

can play a positive role. I ask the Council to help us to continue to do so by working with us on enhanced return of refugees from Yugoslavia to their homes in Kosovo and Metohija, on ensuring freedom of movement for all in Kosovo and Metohija, on bringing to an end standoffs and confrontation with UNMIK and KFOR in Mitrovica, and on a comprehensive programme to locate the missing on all sides. That is the best way forward for Kosovo and Metohija, for Yugoslavia and for the region as a whole.

I wish to draw attention to the detailed briefing material on results in the implementation of the plan for resolution of the crisis in southern Serbia, and on results in the implementation of the Common Document for Kosovo and Metohija of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and UNMIK, copies of which have been made available to members of the Council. Annexed to that material are copies of two very important documents: the Agreement on the Basic Principles for the Holding of Municipal By-elections in South Serbia, and the UNMIK-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I would like first to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this public meeting on Kosovo today. I welcome Deputy Prime Minister Čović to the Chamber and thank him for the statement he just made. I wish also to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his very comprehensive and helpful briefing.

Ireland fully agrees with the statement that will be delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union, so I shall make just a few comments of particular importance to my delegation.

My delegation congratulates the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Michael Steiner, on the ambitious and positive start he has made to his work, building on the achievements of his predecessors. Mr. Steiner has in recent weeks outlined a comprehensive vision for Kosovo's future development, founded on economic progress, the rule of law and a fair and just society for all people in Kosovo. We urge all of Kosovo's elected leaders to work together, including with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR), to achieve the objectives outlined by the Special Representative. Cooperation aimed at achieving those objectives can only enhance Kosovo's European perspectives.

Ireland welcomes the election by the Kosovo Assembly, last month, of Ibrahim Rugova as President and Bajram Rexhepi as Prime Minister of Kosovo, as well as the formation of a Government. Those elections, which ended a critical period of deadlock in Kosovo, are a vital step towards the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). The election of the President and Prime Minister gives real meaning to the views of the Kosovar people as expressed in the elections of last November. We remain concerned, however, at the continued difficulties regarding the participation of the Kosovo Serb Return Coalition in the new Government, and we call on the Kosovo Serb leaders to resolve this new impasse rapidly. We greatly appreciate the facilitation efforts — which I believe Mr. Annabi characterized as creative — of Mr. Steiner in this regard, and we give the Special Representative our full support.

However, ultimately the political leaders in Kosovo must take responsibility for the development of a genuine political dialogue both within and between Kosovo's communities. We are encouraged that there has been some progress at the municipal level, and we look forward to a more inclusive and constructive approach at the highest level as the 21 September municipal elections approach.

The development of a meaningful dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade will be essential to the achievement of the objectives outlined by the Special Representative. The Common Document signed by Belgrade and UNMIK last November provides the framework for such discussions, but it is essential now that Kosovo's elected leaders participate in the High-Ranking Working Group and enhance that dialogue.

Ireland welcomes the creation of a joint expert committee by UNMIK and the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to address practical problems on the ground relating to the implementation of the 2001 border agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. We hope that the committee

can resolve practical issues in a pragmatic way to reduce tensions in the border zone.

The slow rate of Kosovo Serb returns remains 0worrying; it is outpaced by the continued rate of departures. Ireland again encourages the early development of a framework of economic and other measures in order to increase the numbers of those resettling, and remaining, in Kosovo. We appreciated the comments that Mr. Annabi made earlier in that regard. The resettlement process is a key element of the reconciliation process in the province.

Ireland welcomes the transfer, as outlined by Mr. Annabi, of Kosovo Albanian prisoners by the authorities in Belgrade to UNMIK. The detention of those prisoners for almost three years beyond the end of the conflict was unjustifiable, and we hope that the transfer will now assist efforts to develop a real dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The realization of that commitment by the Belgrade authorities removes an unnecessary irritant and is a major step in the process of reconciliation between the Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo.

Ireland also believes that the fight against organized crime must be an absolute priority for the authorities in Kosovo. Without steps to combat crime and the violence that often accompanies it, democracy cannot take effective hold in Kosovo. The establishment of the conditions for real economic growth will also be essential in combating organized crime in the long term. Economic success can follow only in a society based on the rule of law.

Ireland strongly believes that the successful development of Kosovo will help to ensure peace and stability in South-East Europe. Kosovo's vocation lies in Europe. Ireland believes its path — at a speed which only Kosovo itself can determine — must surely lie in the process of European integration. This, in turn, depends on building a truly democratic and multi-ethnic society. We, along with our partners in the European Union, will continue to support greater integration and regional cooperation through the Stability Pact and the stabilization and association process.

Mr. Gokool (Mauritius): I thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his update on the situation in Kosovo. We also welcome Mr. Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, and we thank him for his statement. We are also thankful for the detailed briefing attached to the copy of his statement, and we note with great satisfaction the steady progress towards the final solution to the problems in Kosovo. I would like to commend here the efforts of all the parties in the consolidation of the reconciliation process in southern Serbia.

My delegation congratulates the parties in Kosovo on reaching an agreement on the coalition Government, and on the choice of their President and Prime Minister. The compromise reached demonstrates the good will to work together towards creating a democratic, multi-ethnic and stable Kosovo. Indeed, this development reassures the international community of the strong determination of all parties to build a bright future for all the people of Kosovo.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Steiner for all the efforts he has made to facilitate the dialogue between the parties. We wish Mr. Steiner could be present today to share his views on the challenges facing Kosovo as the new institutions embark on the path to self-rule.

We are happy to note that all the ingredients are in place for the Provisional Self-Government to start full operations and take over executive powers from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). UNMIK has so far fulfilled efficiently its duties of assuming interim governance, but now the reins are in the hands of Kosovo's leaders. We encourage them to sustain the momentum and show that they can govern effectively and fairly for all the citizens of Kosovo.

The agreement reached last month by political leaders contains the right mix of all the necessary components that will ensure the smooth running of the Provisional Self-Government institutions. We note, among others, respect and promotion of democratic principles; free and equal treatment towards all of Kosovo's inhabitants, without discrimination; the creation of conditions conducive to reconciliation and tolerance among different communities; and the adoption of measures to foster rapid economic development. All these appear to be promising, but it is one thing to agree on paper and another to put it into practice — especially in the case of Kosovo, where a democratically elected Government is functioning for the first time. The test is now for the political parties to

show that their will to operate a functioning parliamentary democracy is under way.

Of no less importance is the economic situation of the province. So far, donors have contributed largely in the reconstruction of the economy. Kosovo needs the full engagement of the donor community, as it has suffered from decades of under-investment. We therefore call on all the donors to sustain their assistance to the province. We hope that the request made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Steiner, during his recent visit to European countries will be met with a positive response.

We also welcome the decision of the Provisional Self-Government to adopt the legislation necessary to create the conditions for a market-based economy and to encourage private direct investment. If Kosovo is to stand on its own feet, it cannot depend solely on foreign funding and a single means of revenue collection. Private direct investment in the province will open up opportunities for the people to engage in gainful activities, and it will also positively contribute to creating a stable society. The sooner the decision makers adopt the necessary legislation, the better it will be for the province to reap the benefits. At the same time, the high rate of unemployment can be addressed with the participation of the private and public sectors, and with more investment.

A flourishing economy will also help in bringing internally displaced persons back to their homeland. A high rate of returns can only be possible if a safe and secure environment is guaranteed for the minority communities, and if property rights are restored to them. It is for the political leaders to put all their ideas into constructive action in favour of the integration of minorities into Kosovo's society.

The total elimination of arms and ammunition from the province is equally important if a secure environment is to be created for all the inhabitants. In that regard, we welcome the weapons-amnesty programme set up by UNMIK and KFOR to combat organized crime. We urge all Kosovo to cooperate with UNMIK and KFOR to wipe out all illegal possession of arms and ammunition.

Lastly, we encourage the leaders of the Provisional Self-Government to enhance dialogue with Belgrade in line with the provisions of the Common Document, signed in November 2001. Working together in the High-level Working Group on such practical issues as cooperation in security and tackling organized crime, missing persons and minority rights will surely reinforce mutual confidence. We were happy to learn that the Yugoslav authorities yesterday returned to Kosovo all Albanian detainees held in Serbian prisons since 1999, in accordance with the commitment under the Common Document.

Mr. Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): On the eve of the expiry of your country's mandate to preside over the Security Council, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting, and to tell you once again how much we appreciate the work done by your delegation. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hédi Annabi for the valuable information he has just given us. We would like to welcome the presence among us of Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia and President of the Coordination Centre of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija. We also thank him for his statement.

The last two public meetings of the Council on the issue of Kosovo have enabled us to express our concerns about such pending questions as the political deadlock over the selection of a president and prime minister and the formation of a government, as well as problems linked to security and development. Today my delegation expresses its gratification at the Kosovo Assembly's appointment on 4 March of Mr. Ibrahim Rugova and Mr. Bajram Rexhepi as, respectively, President and Prime Minister of the province. That decision is an important step forward in the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Council. We await with interest the participation of the Kosovo Serb Return Coalition (Povratak) in the Government. We also support Special Representative of the Secretary-General Michael Steiner's efforts to organize municipal elections in September 2002.

With regard to security, we welcome the entry into force of the new weapons and ammunition hand-over programme to retrieve illegally held weapons by Kosovars through a promise of amnesty. We appeal to all those concerned to cooperate in ensuring the success of the programme.

The success of any stabilization effort in Kosovo depends on a programme of reinforcement of institutions and reconciliation, based on tolerance and

mutual respect, taking into account the interests of all Kosovars. The strengthening of cooperation among the elected representatives of Kosovo, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Belgrade authorities will be a measure of confidence in future committed action.

In the humanitarian area, my delegation appreciates the establishment of an inter-ethnic consortium that will take over from the World Food Programme on 31 March 2002. The six local non-governmental organizations that make up the consortium should enjoy the joint support of the international community and the elected representatives and the people of Kosovo.

The question of delineating the border between Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia deserves our attention. We welcome Mr. Michael Steiner's announcement on 18 March of the forthcoming creation of a joint Kosovo-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia commission charged with settling the practical questions that affect the inhabitants on both sides of the border. We appeal to all the parties to rely on dialogue in order to arrive at a negotiated solution that will benefit all concerned.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the settlement of the question of Albanian Kosovars held in the Republic of Serbia and encourages the parties to pursue various activities with a view to the full implementation of the Common Document.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Nebojša Čović. We welcome the specific measures, outlined in his statement, that have been taken by Belgrade in order to promote the comprehensive implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). We are also grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his briefing.

The situation in Kosovo is developing quickly but, unfortunately, not always in the direction outlined by resolution 1244 (1999) — indeed, far from it. The international community's attention to the Kosovo settlement should not flag if we want to prevent that province from turning into the cancer of Europe. The new head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), from the very outset, has managed to accomplish quickly one of the important tasks — breaking the political deadlock caused by the inability of the Kosovar leaders to agree on the distribution of the top leadership posts in the province's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. However, it is clear that the institutionalization of power in these organs has not helped accomplish the main task — guaranteeing the security of the province's population, primarily the non-Albanian segment.

We believe that the priority efforts of the international presences in Kosovo should focus on creating the right conditions for security and equality for all the province's inhabitants, irrespective of ethnic origin or other characteristics. Although some positive changes have taken place in this area, the international presences in Kosovo still have many problems to face, as was confirmed clearly by the facts that Mr. Čović and Mr. Annabi mentioned in their statements.

Again, we must state that the return of refugees and internally displaced persons is being intolerably delayed. This situation is undermining the authority of the international presences in the eyes of the local Serbian and other non-Albanian communities and of the international community as well. Refugee returns will be an important indicator of readiness to hold the new municipal elections planned for September.

In this connection, we are concerned that the European Commission has postponed the donor conference to raise funds for implementing the programme for the return of refugees to the province. That conference had been planned for April, and now it has been postponed until October or even November — after the planned election date. This will definitely make it less possible for UNMIK to make normal preparations for these elections, which should be fair and just for all those who now live in Kosovo or who lived there previously.

We are also concerned that the acuteness of the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons is not being valued properly in UNMIK's 2002-2003 budget. We know that UNMIK has stated several times that the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and the creation of normal conditions for national minorities are Mission priorities. Nevertheless, UNMIK is not asking for any additional human or material resources for these purposes in the budget.

That is surprising, and we hope that the situation will be redressed as a matter of urgency.

Other priority tasks of UNMIK and KFOR include, in our view, the creation of the conditions for a multi-ethnic society in the province and, to that end, the establishment of an inter-communal dialogue, as well as vigorous action against crime and criminal organizations, the completion of demilitarization and the disarmament of former Kosovo Liberation Army combatants, and the blocking of any attempt by the leaders of the Kosovo Protection Corps to give that body a military role.

Today there is talk about the importance of cooperation between UNMIK and Belgrade. We are convinced that Belgrade should become a partner of UNMIK in defining priorities and resolving practical issues relating to the establishment of normal conditions in Kosovo, in the context of the comprehensive implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). Vital tasks such as the creation of a basis for a market economy, privatization, the involvement of Kosovo in projects included in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the return of displaced persons (which has already been discussed) all these tasks must be carried out in close consultation with the Yugoslav authorities. It is important to increase specific contacts on these questions and others in the context of the High-Ranking Working Group created on the basis of the Common Document dated 5 November last year. In addition, the Document itself must, of course, be implemented fully.

In the light of developments with which the Council is familiar, we think it would be timely to step up the joint actions of UNMIK, Belgrade and Skopje to provide speedy practical implementation of the Agreement on delineation of the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Macedonia dated 23 February 2001. We anticipate speedy action by UNMIK's leadership, who should take the initiative here.

We support the efforts by KFOR and UNMIK to try to reduce the large numbers of illegal weapons and explosive substances drifting around the province; ideally, we would like such weapons and substances to be eliminated. We think, however, that those efforts have fallen short, particularly given the current level of political extremism in Kosovo. Moreover, KFOR and UNMIK should provide proper control over the Kosovar section of the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania and Macedonia.

As the Council knows, the representatives of the international presences are not ruling out the possibility that, with the onset of spring, the Albanian extremist groups in Macedonia, with support from Kosovo, may become more active. We hope that these issues are being constantly addressed by the international presences.

The problem of curbing extremism is an acute one, not only in Kosovo but on a regional scale as well. We believe that this merits our attention, as it is a regional threat.

We believe that, at this stage, the focus of all of the efforts of the international community should be on the tasks I have just spoken of, which relate directly to facilitating normal living conditions in Kosovo and to creating conditions that will allow for a genuine multi-ethnic society. All those who lived in Kosovo earlier should be able to live there now, in their homes, and to coexist normally as human beings. Until these conditions are created, it would be not merely counterproductive but downright politically dangerous to start talking about any final status for Kosovo.

The province is facing many problems, which we have to resolve urgently. Here I fully agree with the points made by Deputy Prime Minister Čović. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Steiner, is well known as a very energetic and persistent person who is able to get results. We hope that all of these qualities will be demonstrated actively in Kosovo — strictly in keeping, of course, with resolution 1244 (1999).

We think that in April the Security Council should carry out a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of that resolution, with the participation of the Special Representative.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I should like to start by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his very specific and useful briefing. I should like also to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this public debate on Kosovo this month. I should like also to welcome the presence of Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Nebojša Čović at the Council table today and to thank him for his important statement.

Bulgaria associates itself with the statement to be made later on by Spain on behalf of the European Union. I should like simply to make a few comments in my national capacity.

My country believes that the election of the President of Kosovo, Mr. Ibrahim Rugova; of the Prime Minister, Mr. Bajram Rexhepi; and of the other members of the Government on 4 March 2002 represents an encouraging step that will create favourable conditions for the reconstruction of the province's economy and for the establishment of the rule of law, and that will promote the combat against violence and organized crime.

Bulgaria is grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Michael Steiner, for his contribution to the conclusion of the agreement on the composition of the Kosovo government. We would like to assure him that he continue to count on Bulgaria's full support.

My country appeals to the newly elected Kosovo leadership to act responsibly in exercising the prerogatives they now enjoy under the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government and resolution 1244 (1999). It is important that these new leaders respect international agreements on Kosovo, in particular the border demarcation agreement signed by the Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 23 February 2001, which was endorsed by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 7 March 2001.

Bulgaria welcomes the cooperation between UNMIK and the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which is of great importance in improving the security situation and in building confidence in the entire region.

In this connection, I should like to welcome the recent transfer of Albanian-speaking prisoners from Belgrade to Pristina, and I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank Deputy Prime Minister Čović for his personal involvement in that important decision.

My country welcomes the decision taken by UNMIK and the Macedonian authorities to set up a joint UNMIK-Republic of Macedonia commission entrusted with resolving practical issues related to the common border, under existing agreements. Bulgaria supports the measures taken by UNMIK to concentrate its efforts on combating organized crime in all of its forms — traffic in human beings, in drugs and in weapons. Additional resources will have to be earmarked to enhance the effectiveness of these activities. The socio-economic impact of these phenomena could jeopardize nascent institutions as well as inter-ethnic relations that are already very fragile. Bulgaria will continue to demand that the circumstances of the brutal murder in Kosovo of our compatriot Valentin Krumov be brought to light fully, and that those responsible are arrested as soon as possible.

My country supports the international community's efforts to respond appropriately to the funding needs of projects of vital importance to Kosovo. In this connection, we expect the donors' conference to provide the necessary resources, in the framework of concrete undertakings relating to democratization programmes and to the return of refugees.

My country wishes to emphasize the importance of the strategy developed by the European Commission and the World Bank, which will to make it possible to reduce Kosovo's dependence on outside assistance and which, we believe, should give priority to small and medium-sized businesses.

Bulgaria will continue to allocate resources, to the extent of its ability, for its continued participation in collective instruments for the maintenance of peace and stability in Kosovo. Let me recall that 207 Bulgarians are working in Civpol and in the KFOR military contingent. Thirteen other Bulgarians are working in Kosovo in the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

My country intends to establish a permanent diplomatic presence in Kosovo through a liaison office in Pristina.

Over the last few months, we have seen budding ethnic tolerance developing in the province. We welcome this positive development, but we remain aware that it is only the minimal beginning, perhaps too minimal, of a process that is undoubtedly going to be difficult. Deputy Prime Minister Čović spoke very eloquently about this aspect. We will continue to support the emergence of a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, with respect for the rule of law and human rights as primary considerations.

Only UNMIK's and KFOR's presence can make it possible to guarantee security and normalcy for all of the inhabitants of Kosovo, in close cooperation with the local authorities. That presence is a decisive factor for security in Kosovo, as it can serve to promote the return to Kosovo of refugees and internally displaced persons of all ethnic groups.

In this context, my delegation would like to welcome the KFOR and UNMIK amnesty programme. It is designed to promote the handover of illegally held arms and ammunition over a one-month period. We feel that this is a very important and positive step aimed at enhancing security in the province.

We would like also to welcome the decision by the Belgrade authorities to transfer prisoners of Albanian origin to Pristina, as I mentioned earlier. This is an important gesture of openness on the part of the federal Government.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that only a European perspective with respect to the entire region can provide a response to the long-term problems of Kosovo.

In that connection, I would like to say that, as a neighbouring country, Bulgaria will continue to work, within the Council and elsewhere, to help get these aspirations translated into reality as soon as possible.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Hédi Annabi for the very valuable comprehensive briefing that he gave us, and I certainly want to join our colleagues in welcoming the two positive developments relating to self-government and the transfer of the prisoners back to Kosovo.

We would also like to thank Deputy Prime Minister Čović for his statement. In our view, he made some important points. I would like to use the bulk of my statement today to respond to some of the points that Mr. Čović made this morning. I would like to quote a few paragraphs of his statement.

He said:

> "Turning to Kosovo and Metohija, the most important point that I wish to make is that we are currently in a race against time. Two different forces are going to be pushing harder and harder to come to a final solution for Kosovo and Metohija: the ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija and, for separate reasons, the international community, which is growing tired of investing resources and energy in the Balkans. If this last statement should be doubted, one need only consider the sharp reduction in refugee funding for the Balkans for next year or the statements made by various troop contributors about withdrawing all or part of their forces.
>
> "I firmly believe that we have less time than most of us think or want to prepare for this final solution, so every day counts. I personally think that, unless we make major progress on key issues this very year, we will face immense problems."

I think that that was a very strong statement on the part of the Deputy Prime Minister. I believe that it behoves us as members of the Council to discuss whether or not we share that evaluation. If we share it, why do we do so? And if not, why not?

That brings me to a point that I was planning to make in today's discussion. I find that when we discuss the Kosovo issue we face a real paradox. We probably discuss it more regularly than any other issue — we have regular meetings once a month to discuss the Kosovo situation. Indeed, I think that this is our fifteenth discussion of the subject. But what we have had so far are 15 snapshots of the situation, with no clear indication of a trend line showing which way things are going in Kosovo. I think it is important for us actually to work out the trend line, especially in view of what Mr. Čović said.

I would like to add that if we do not do so, the media will do the job for us and come up with their own assessment of how we are doing in Kosovo. I would like to quote from two recent assessments. One was made yesterday in a broadcast by the German radio station *Deutsche Welle*. It said:

> "Three years after NATO joined up with Albanian rebels to expel Yugoslavian forces from the breakaway southern Serbian province, Kosovo is a weird western protectorate with half-fulfilled dreams and tough times ahead. It is still a broken place, despite the NATO intervention — or partly because of it, depending on how you look at it. Kosovo, the southernmost province of Serbia, is home to a mostly ethnic Albanian population and a thinning minority population of Serbs, and it is the temporary home to some 46,000 NATO troops. Their presence, a remnant

> of the military alliance's 78-day bombing campaign that began three years ago on Sunday, has brought the region some stability but no miracles."

I quote from an editorial in *The Washington Post*, entitled "The Kosovo Measure" and dated Saturday, 16 March. It states:

> "Like Afghanistan, Kosovo is a deeply impoverished land with extensive war damage and deep residual tensions among its different ethnic groups. So it is worth taking the measure of what reconstruction there has so far required — and what is still needed. NATO began with a peacekeeping force of 60,000 troops and today still has 36,000 troops deployed" —

I note that *Deutsche Welle* says that there are 46,000 troops.

The editorial report continues,

> "Sixty nations have sent military or civilian personnel to the Balkan province, and $2 billion has been spent just on civilian programmes since 1999."

The Washington Post goes on to compare the situation with Afghanistan, stating:

> "All this has been necessary for a province that is about the size of Connecticut, contains about 2 million people and is at least close to the rich nations of Europe. Afghanistan, which is 60 times larger than Kosovo, has 13 times its population and suffers from far greater impoverishment and war damage, has received nothing close to an equivalent commitment. Only $4.5 billion in reconstruction aid has been pledged so far, and the mandate of the small international peacekeeping force expires in few months."

Clearly, if we do not make our own assessments of what we have achieved or failed to achieve in Kosovo, we will be faced with assessments made by other parties. That is why we believe that it would be useful, in these monthly discussions, to step back and take a long view of what we are achieving in Kosovo. Here, we would like to reiterate two points that we made during the previous debate, in January. First, we said that we need to have a regular review of the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), because UNMIK is unusual in the sense that it has a mandate in perpetuity, when every other peacekeeping operation has very specific time frames.

In the second point that we made, we emphasized that that we also need very carefully to work out, over time, an exit strategy for Kosovo, because, bearing in mind the comments of the Deputy Prime Minister, if we want to ensure that we leave it in a good fashion, we must ensure that we build up to doing so.

In this regard, I was very encouraged by the concluding remarks of Ambassador Lavrov. If I got the translation right, he said that time had perhaps come to do a comprehensive survey of this issue and that it could be undertaken in the month of April. We hope that during that comprehensive survey we will be able to welcome Mr. Steiner to the Council. As our colleague from Mauritius said earlier, we would be very happy to welcome Mr. Steiner here to join in that review. At the same time, we hope that, during the comprehensive survey, we will also address a point that has been left hanging on Kosovo: the final resolution of Kosovo's future status.

I think that we are all aware that, in paragraph 11 (e), resolution 1244 (1999) calls on UNMIK to facilitate "a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet accords". The Rambouillet accords were signed on 18 March 1999. Under those accords, three years after entry into force we were supposed to have formulated a mechanism for a final settlement for Kosovo. The three-year time frame expired on 18 March 2002, nine days ago. Perhaps when we meet in April to undertake a comprehensive survey we should ask ourselves what happened to that time frame that was set three years ago.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Your presidency this month, sir, has been characterized by open debates on very important issues. I should like to thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his very valuable statement on developments since 25 February. I would also like very warmly to welcome Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to thank him for the very detailed statement that he gave to the Council on the latest developments in Kosovo and the Balkans.

My delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the endorsement by the Kosovo

Assembly on 27 February of Mr. Ibrahim Rugova as President and at the formation of a Government in Kosovo under the leadership of Mr. Bajram Rexhepi, in accordance with the coalition agreement of 4 March. This was the first important step in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) towards breaking the impasse that has lasted for so long. It will allow the transitional entities in Kosovo fully to carry out their tasks in accordance with the Constitutional Framework. It will also strengthen the cultural dialogue among the many political parties in Kosovo, as Mr. Annabi pointed out in referring to the fact that the coalition Government is made up of representatives of all parties but one, which decided not to join the coalition but expressed its desire to participate. We hope that this desire will be fulfilled as soon as possible.

It is also a cause of satisfaction to us that these transitional departments are to become ministries. At the same time, we hope that all groups and principal ethnicities will enjoy equal and fair representation in the Government so that stability may prevail in those institutions. It is only right that we take into consideration the concerns expressed by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia. In doing so, we will promote stability in Kosovo in accordance with the agreements of November 2001.

I wish to reaffirm the importance of focusing on the security situation in the light of these positive developments. This will require a redoubling of efforts to establish conditions conducive to coexistence among all the elements of society in Kosovo and to improve relations among all communities there, thus strengthening the reconciliation process. It will also help to establish an equitable security and political situation and lead to the continued economic and social development of all sectors of the population in Kosovo.

As to the idea referred to by the Deputy Prime Minister of building a five-meter wall separating Kosovo from Yugoslavia, I found it very strange, particularly given that we live in an era that has rejected the erection of walls, such as the Berlin Wall, and rejoiced in its destruction. How can we now accept the erection of a new wall in that region?

We welcome the initiative of releasing Albanian prisoners to Pristina, which has come about through the efforts of the Yugoslav Government, particularly those of Deputy Prime Minister Čović.

We also wish to highlight the issue of the various ethnic minorities in Kosovo. These must be represented equitably in political life if we truly wish security and stability to prevail in Kosovo. In this regard, I am pleased to note the declining murder rate, as pointed out by Mr. Annabi, and the measures taken towards the second weapons amnesty in Kosovo. While these developments coincided with the formation of the new Government and will promote security in Kosovo, they do not resolve the issue of whether it is possible for these conditions to prevail, particularly in view of the extremism espoused by certain elements there. We must find an answer to this very important question.

We support the efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Steiner, since he assumed the leadership of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to maintain the rule of law and fully to implement resolution 1244 (1999). We hope that we will be able to hear a detailed briefing by Mr. Steiner in April on the true direction of and latest developments in the situation in Kosovo.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes in turn to thank you, Sir, for convening this third meeting of the year on Kosovo.

My delegation wishes to express its support for the very relevant points made by the Ambassador of Singapore regarding the need in due course for a comprehensive survey of the situation.

We welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia. We listened very attentively to his message. Cameroon has taken due note of his request for multilateral assistance to establish a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo — in other words, multilateral assistance from the international community to preserve the existence of Kosovo.

We thank Mr. Annabi for his very detailed briefing at the start of the meeting on the latest developments in Kosovo. Cameroon's position on the question of Kosovo was outlined here on 21 January and 25 February. On those occasions, we stated our conviction that certain actions had to be undertaken as a matter of priority if we wished to consolidate the few achievements that had been made towards the revival

of life in Kosovo. Those actions, we felt, were threefold: the strengthening of security, the disarmament of all armed groups and encouraging all minorities to return. We insisted on the point that these actions were top priorities and we still deem them to be so today because they can preserve Kosovo's very existence, which entails preserving its unity.

We welcome the progress mentioned by Mr. Annabi as having been made this month in those priority areas, the most important being the formation of a coalition Government. That was indeed of great importance, and showed that the message sent by the 17 November 2001 elections has finally been heeded. Every time we have addressed the question of Kosovo, we have consistently said that the message is that what is needed to govern Kosovo is inclusion, not exclusion. What is needed is definitely to work together, and a coalition bringing together all segments of society. That is why we call on all parties, including the Kosovo Serb Return Coalition, to participate in the Government by nominating representatives.

We congratulate Mr. Steiner on his efforts, and especially on the wealth of imagination he has drawn on to achieve these results.

We call on all States in the region to respect all territorial agreements. That is essential for the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

We take this opportunity to deplore the violence and crime that continue to cause terror and despair among the people. Here, we welcome the anti-crime campaign put in place by UNMIK regulation 2002/6 of 18 March 2002. In addition to the second weapons amnesty, we welcome the transfer of prisoners to Kosovo.

Those were the points we felt we needed to make at today's open meeting on the question of Kosovo.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): First, let me extend a warm welcome to Deputy Prime Minister Čović and convey our thanks to Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for — as always — a very helpful, useful and informative briefing. My delegation associates itself with the statement that will be made by Spain on behalf of the European Union later in the debate, so I can be relatively brief.

Like others, we welcome the very positive developments that have taken place since our last briefing on Kosovo. We welcome in particular the election of the President and the Government by the Kosovo Assembly. That was a key step forward both for Kosovo and for regional security. And also like others, I would like to congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Steiner, on having secured that agreement and on his attempts to complete the process by ensuring Serbian participation in the Government. It is, very clearly, strongly in the interests of the Serbian community to play its full part in this endeavour. The provisional self-government administration needs to work in the best interests of all communities, and the best way to ensure that is for the Serbian community to take part. We urge the earliest possible agreement to such participation. I would also say that this is going to be an important benchmark. I very much welcome what Hédi Annabi had to say about the Special Representative's intention to set benchmarks, which is something for which the United Kingdom has argued for quite a long time in successive discussions in the Council.

We also welcome the second important development, to which others have referred: the transfer of Kosovo Albanian prisoners from Serbian prisons to the custody of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). That is an important step in building trust and confidence between the ethnic communities. Here and now, I should like to congratulate Deputy Prime Minister Čović and UNMIK on their roles in delivering this successful outcome. We look forward to the completion of the process of the review of sentences.

The dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which as soon as possible should include representatives of the new provisional Government, is essential to regional stability. Both sides need to continue to engage positively in order to represent effectively the interests of all communities. Those interests include making the most rapid progress possible on the commitments in the November 2001 Common Document. There is a clear need in particular for close cooperation on the return of internally displaced persons from minority communities. If I may say so in his presence, Deputy Prime Minister Čović has a central role to play in that process, and we look forward to continued and further intensified cooperation between his Coordination Centre and both UNMIK and the new provisional Government.

I make no apology for returning now to the issues of extremism, terrorism and organized crime, which have been a persistent theme in United Kingdom statements to the Council. These are regional problems, and they need regional solutions. We welcome the existing cooperation between law and order ministers and police forces and other actors. But it needs to be intensified to ensure that criminals have nowhere to which to run. We support further investment by UNMIK in its law and order capability, and in particular in those measures designed to combat organized crime. We are eager for the number of Kosovo Police Service officers to be further increased, with the number of international officers being reduced only in parallel with such an increase. We further welcome steps to increase the specialization of UNMIK police officers in areas such as organized crime.

I would agree with Deputy Prime Minister Čović that the two key areas on which we should be focusing are the building of institutions and a multi-ethnic society. I am not sure that I find Ambassador Lavrov's image of "the cancer of Europe" (*supra*) particularly encouraging, but it is self-evidently something which we must all strive desperately to avoid. It goes without saying that if we are to do so we must, as a Council, both recognize the importance of a functioning and effective dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and send a resounding message of support for the efforts of the Special Representative, who has made such a good start in his new job. I am very pleased to say that I think that the sense of the debate today very strongly reflects both those points.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I thank Mr. Annabi, and I welcome Deputy Prime Minister Čović to the Council and thank him for his presentation to us.

We too applaud the success of the people of Kosovo and their political leaders on the formation of a new Government. Special Representative Steiner deserves a special word of appreciation for his important role in helping to broker that agreement.

We encourage President Rugova and Prime Minister Rexhepi and Assembly President Thaci to address the many difficult issues that the Government will now have to face. Their initial statements expressing the new Government's commitment to the rule of law, economic reform, enhanced security and, very importantly, to the rights of minorities are encouraging. We need to see results, and we urge them to follow through.

We are deeply pleased to welcome yesterday's transfer from Serbia to Kosovo of Kosovo Albanian detainees. This is very good news. We commend Deputy Prime Minister Čović, Special Representative Steiner and all those who helped make this important step forward possible. It is our hope that this long-awaited action will promote further improvement in the atmosphere for ethnic relations in Kosovo and help foster consensus on other critical issues facing all Kosovars, such as economic reform.

In that regard, we, like others, are disappointed that Kosovo Serbs have so far resisted participation in the Government. It is profoundly in the interests of all Kosovar Serbs to engage. A central challenge for the new Government will be to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence that will reassure Serbs and other minorities, encouraging returns and reconciliation. It seems we all agree that this should be an objective of this process, and a visible Government role for the Serbs is necessary to accomplish this. We strongly support Special Representative Steiner's efforts to encourage constructive engagement by Kosovar Serbs in governing institutions. I want to strongly encourage the Deputy Prime Minister to continue constructive efforts to encourage that participation as well, and to discourage thinking about parallel Serb institutions.

My Government continues to believe that privatization and other economic priorities are now key to accelerating the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Economic growth and investment are ultimately the best basis for rebuilding a democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo and for laying the ground for the future.

We welcome the appointment of the new United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Police Commissioner, Mr. Feller, and we support his efforts to strengthen the Kosovo Police Service and to continue the fight against organized crime. I want strongly to second Ambassador Eldon's comments with regard to crime and terrorism.

There is certainly a great deal still to be done, but I have to say that we are encouraged by the progress that Special Representative Steiner and UNMIK have been able to make over the last month. We have seen some important steps forward. The Special

Representative has our full support. We look forward to hearing from him personally in the near future.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by welcoming Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister Čović and Mr. Annabi, and by thanking them for the information they have given us. That information has provided us with a more comprehensive picture of what is taking place on the ground.

Several important events have taken place in the last month that are of importance for the future of Kosovo and of the region in general. We would like to highlight four such events that we believe are relevant to the discussions of the Security Council.

First, with regard to the formation of the Government of Kosovo, we would like to highlight the agreement reached in recent days between the leaders of the main Kosovo parties and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. That agreement has made it possible to move forward in the formation of a new Government after several months of efforts. We are convinced that the new leaders will be cognizant of the historical responsibilities that rest in their hands with regard to the creation of a multi-ethnic society grounded in democratic principles. We urge them to concentrate their efforts on building new institutions that will guarantee a solid foundation for a future debate on Kosovo's final status.

We are concerned by the reaction of the Serb coalition with regard to its participation in the Government. We hope that they will accept the options put forward by Special Representative Steiner, and that they will not make their participation in the Government contingent upon the creation of a ministry. We ask Deputy Prime Minister Čović to intervene in the negotiations in order to secure Serb participation in the new Government structure.

My second point concerns the exchange of prisoners between Belgrade and Kosovo. We welcome the agreement reached between the Belgrade Government and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) concerning prisoners of war. That agreement led to yesterday's transfer of over 146 Albanian prisoners from Serbia to Kosovo. This is a demonstration of good will and of the cooperative relationship that has been established between UNMIK and the Government in Belgrade, of which Mr. Čović is one of the principal architects.

My third point has to do with the setting up of the joint committee on border affairs. We would like to highlight the establishment of the committee of experts on border issues after the signing of an agreement between UNMIK and the Government of Macedonia. We believe that the work of the committee will make possible the search for adequate solutions to the problems that are now arising between farmers and livestock owners while, at the same time, taking into account the Agreement on the delineation of the border, signed last year by the Governments of Yugoslavia and Macedonia. We believe that the committee's work should be made known in a timely way to the new authorities in Kosovo so as to avoid any misunderstandings and ensure compliance by all parties in any decision taken by the committee.

My fourth point concerns relations between UNMIK, Belgrade and the Government of Kosovo. Colombia has been insisting on the need to establish transparent and effective cooperation between the authorities in Belgrade, the new Government in Kosovo and UNMIK through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We would like to take the opportunity offered by the presence here of Deputy Prime Minister Čović — who has been an essential contributor to the strengthening of relations between his Government and UNMIK — to emphasize the need for a rapprochement with the authorities in Kosovo. We recognize that there are still several issues on which the two Governments' positions are at odds but we are convinced that with the help of the Special Representative, they will find common ground and ways of addressing the existing differences. It is only through joint efforts between the leaders that we will be able to ensure the creation of a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo in which guarantees exist for all citizens.

Finally, we support the proposal of the Russian Federation for a comprehensive review of the successes and failures of UNMIK over the past three years.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I too wish to convey very warm congratulations to Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia and President of the Yugoslav-Serb Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija. I welcome to our discussion today the participation of an eminent Yugoslav political leader responsible for Kosovar questions.

I would also like to thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his briefing, which highlighted the successes achieved by the United Nations in Kosovo since his last briefing, on 25 February. Those successes are particularly important, as they were achieved in a short span of time.

France of course supports the detailed statement to be made in due course by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. In my national capacity, I should now like to take up some issues to which France attaches particular importance.

The election of Mr. Ibrahim Rugova to the presidency of Kosovo and the creation of a coalition Government under the leadership of Mr. Bajram Rexhepi are the most significant developments of recent weeks. I congratulate Mr. Rugova and Mr. Rexhepi on their election. It is also fitting to welcome the personal contribution of Mr. Michael Steiner to this success.

The political agreement concluded under the aegis of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will render viable the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government. The elected leaders of the Povratak coalition must play their part in the Self-Government, in which the Constitutional Framework has given them a full role to play — as well as in the Kosovo Assembly, in which Povratak is an important political force. They have that responsibility to their electorate, but also to Kosovo as a whole, which must be fully developed within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework. We support the actions by the Special Representative to break the current deadlock.

A considerable amount of work awaits the Government of Kosovo. The daily administration of Kosovo is now its responsibility. It must therefore become involved in the details and tasks of management, without delay. The welfare of the entire population depends on the quality of its judgement and the soundness of its decisions. The stakes justify its full shouldering of the responsibilities which fall to it under the Constitutional Framework.

It is important that, in exercising its functions, the Government of Kosovo be guided by concern for the common interest. Public activities must be carried out to benefit all residents, including minorities. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General will ensure this in implementing the provisions of the Constitutional Framework and of resolution 1244 (1999).

Everything possible should be done to improve the lot of the members of Kosovo's minority communities. Economic development and strengthening security will be decisive in bringing down the emigration rate, which is too high.

In parallel, because of its symbolic importance and its human implications, the issue of returns should continue to receive attention. We expect the Kosovar leaders of Albanian origin, who are cooperating actively with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) at all levels, including the local level, to ensure that the projects under way are completed. The mobilization of everyone around this cause is essential. We welcome the appeal launched by Mr. Rexhepi in Kamenica to free the province from intolerance and to integrate the minorities living in enclaves. This path should be pursued so as to ensure tangible results.

More generally, it is important that the agreement concluded on 5 November between Mr. Haekkerup and Mr. Čović be implemented fully. We already see the results with the transfer of the last Albanian prisoners from Serbia to Kosovo. The settlement of this matter is a definite success that illustrates the usefulness of close and confident cooperation between UNMIK, the elected Kosovar representatives and the competent Yugoslav authorities on practical matters of common interest. We look forward to Mr. Čović's continued involvement in the implementation of the agreement of 5 November by way of dialogue with UNMIK and soon, we hope, with the institutions of the Provisional Self-Government.

The agreement concluded in Belgrade on 14 March under the aegis of Mr. Javier Solana with regard to relations between Serbia and Montenegro will help strengthen stability in South-East Europe and draw that region closer to Europe. We welcome the political courage of the signatories, which is exemplary. The agreement does not change the identity or the international personality of the State. Therefore, the international obligations and laws relevant to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in particular resolution 1244 (1999), will continue to apply to the common State of Serbia and Montenegro.

Ms. Lajous (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I begin, I should like to join all the Council members who have thanked Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for the information he has presented to us. Most especially, I should like to express my appreciation for the comments of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Nebojša Čović, who has left us with a very clear message: time is short, and we must carry forward two urgent tasks — building the area's institutions and constructing a multi-ethnic society.

At the beginning of this month, the Kosovo Assembly ratified the agreement reached by the main parties of the province to establish a Provisional Self-Government headed by President Ibrahim Rugova and Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi. Mexico welcomes this achievement, because it will help facilitate the transfer of power from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the Provisional Institutions, in conformity with resolution 1244 (1999). This will certainly contribute to stabilizing the region. A very delicate phase will also begin — that of ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, that the Government's responsibilities are transferred to the local authorities within the existing Constitutional Framework. We must remember that we have a long path ahead of us, but hopefully we will reach the end soon.

The province continues to be one of the most backward areas in Europe in economic terms, and many things must still be done to establish fully the rule of law in order to combat organized crime more effectively and promote economic growth. This will require the political will and maturity of all actors involved. A harmonious Kosovo implies that trust will prevail among all residents of the province and requires that the rancorous memories of the past be left behind. This is a prerequisite to the full implementation of the concepts of democracy and respect for human rights. The trust that can be developed among all of the social groups, without external exclusion or intrusion, will be the basis for a prosperous Kosovo strengthened by unity.

The return to their homes of internally displaced persons and refugees will show that progress is being made on this path. We have taken note of UNMIK's efforts to bring back to the province the Albanians who were held in Serb prisons and of measures taken to liberate persons whose sentences could be considered invalid.

The international community is observing with interest the activities of UNMIK and of the various United Nations organs and regional security organizations that have provided an example of strategic association to build a durable peace in Kosovo. Mexico encourages UNMIK and all international agencies that work in the province to continue their altruistic and fruitful work for international peace and security.

We welcome the proposal made by several delegations that Mr. Steiner should address the Council during the month of April and tell us about the progress achieved, particularly as regards border issues with Macedonia.

Mexico takes note of the document on the first steps towards the redefinition of relations between Serbia and Montenegro, signed on 14 March in Belgrade, in particular as it relates to resolution 1244 (1999).

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, like my colleagues who spoke before me, I should like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his briefing.

The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence of Mr. Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia, and we thank him for his important statement. We endorse his views.

We believe that the top priorities in Kosovo at present are, first, institution-building, and secondly, the building of a genuinely multi-ethnic society.

In his statement, Deputy Prime Minister Čović noted that all prisoners of Albanian origin have been transferred from Serbia to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). This will facilitate national reconciliation and mutual trust. We deeply appreciate the efforts made by Mr. Čović in this regard.

The overall situation in Kosovo has been stable recently. Progress is being made with respect to the political process and to economic development. Of note is the fact that the various parties in Kosovo have reached an agreement on a coalition Government. We welcome this progress. However, we cannot overlook

the fact that transboundary organized crime and arms trafficking remain serious concerns.

There has been no notable improvement in the security situation in minority areas, and the return of ethnic minorities is occurring at a slow pace. We hope that UNMIK will strengthen its cooperation with Belgrade to make further efforts to address the problems I mentioned earlier.

We hope also that the Kosovo coalition Government, with the help of UNMIK, will implement strictly resolution 1244 (1999), so as to establish a harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

The Chinese delegation welcomes the efforts made in Skopje, with the facilitation of Mr. Steiner, to establish a joint expert committee to address border problems. We hope that this committee will play an active role in helping both sides implement resolution 1244 (1999). On the basis of the border demarcation agreement signed by the Government of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, it will be possible effectively to address the practical border issues between Pristina and Skopje, so as to ensure normal living conditions for people on the ground.

We would note also that, not long ago, remarks were made that are harmful to peaceful coexistence among the countries of the region and that are detrimental to the stability of Kosovo and of the region as a whole. This has drawn the attention of the international community. We hope that such events will not be repeated.

In conclusion, we hope that the parties concerned will effectively implement resolution 1244 (1999) and continue to work towards peace, stability and economic development in the region of the Balkans.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Norway.

Norway appreciates the participation here today of Deputy Prime Minister Čović as a key actor in our work on Kosovo and as a prominent representative of the democratic leadership in Belgrade, with which my country has excellent relations.

Like others, we welcome the election of a President and a provisional Government in Kosovo as a major step in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). For the Kosovo structures to function effectively, cooperation is needed involving elected representatives, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and Belgrade.

Norway encourages dialogue between the Return Coalition, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Steiner and Kosovo leaders to ensure full Kosovo Serb participation in the provisional Government structures. The involvement of Belgrade is important, and we encourage Mr. Čović to work with constructive Kosovo Serb leaders to achieve solutions that will be in the interests of all Kosovo Serbs.

Norway welcomes the active and constructive role of Belgrade in recent months, which was demonstrated again yesterday by the release of Kosovar Albanian detainees from Serbian prisons.

Cooperation between UNMIK and the Yugoslav authorities can, however, be further developed. The High-Ranking Working Group should be used as a mechanism for constructive dialogue between democratically elected leaders in Pristina and Belgrade.

The overall decline in violent crime and murder in Kosovo over the last year gives grounds for optimism, but not for complacency. The security situation for ethnic minorities continues to be of concern. The strengthening of law and order in Kosovo is necessary. This is not only a minority issue but a civic issue affecting all segments of Kosovo's population.

Organized crime and illegal trafficking are of great concern, not only for Kosovo but for the region and Europe at large. Norway supports the initiative by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Steiner to confer greater powers on the UNMIK police to combat organized crime in Kosovo. We also support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's veterans' amnesty programme and urge Kosovo leaders to work with UNMIK for its success.

The return of internally displaced persons remains an important challenge. Greater efforts must be made to create conditions for sustainable return. This will be an important measure of the Kosovo leaders' commitment to safeguarding the human rights of all inhabitants in Kosovo. International engagement will also continue to be required in order to facilitate minority returns.

Norway emphasizes that the newly elected provisional Government of Kosovo must respect the

border demarcation agreement of 23 February 2001. Elected representatives in the Kosovo Assembly, as well as provisional Government authorities, must strictly abide by Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework.

Norway welcomes the agreement reached between Montenegro and Serbia on a constitutional arrangement between the two Republics. The agreement contributes to regional stability and shows that political negotiations can result in mutually acceptable arrangements. It also contributes to a more stable environment for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) in Kosovo.

Through the Secretariat, I should like to convey to Mr. Steiner Norway's full support for his efforts, and we look forward to seeing him here in the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus, Turkey, Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

We welcome the participation of Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of the Yugoslav Constituent Republic of Serbia, in today's meeting of the Council.

The European Union welcomes the election by the Kosovo Assembly of the President of Kosovo, Mr. Ibrahim Rugova, and the establishment of a Government, which mark an important step forward in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Union believes that these newly established institutions will fully take on the functions assigned to them by the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government. We congratulate Special Representative Steiner for his success in brokering an agreement on the formation of the Government, and support his intention to hold municipal elections on 21 September.

We look forward to a resolution of the question of the participation of the Povratak Coalition in the Government. Povratak has a crucial role to play in shaping Kosovo's new institutions.

The European Union supports the intention of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to tackle the challenges of laying the foundation for economic development; establishing a political culture based on the rule of law, including the fight against organized crime and violence; and building a fair and just society with dignity for all. The European Union calls on all the parties to cooperate fully with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR in pursuing those objectives.

The fight against organized crime and violence continues to be of the utmost importance to the Union. Freedom from fear is a fundamental requirement if democracy is to take root in Kosovo. We support all steps aimed at the eradication of organized crime and violence and welcome the recently adopted regulation to step up the investigation of criminal activities. We also look forward to forthcoming regulations to tackle the economic crime that is hindering progress in the establishment of a functioning economy.

The European Union continues to support the full implementation of the Common Document for cooperation between UNMIK and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, signed last November. We hope that there will be significant progress in all areas within that framework. We welcome the announcement that all Kosovo Albanians detained in the Republic of Serbia have been returned to Kosovo. That does, indeed, constitute a good example of the efficacy of such cooperation.

We also expect cooperation between the elected representatives of the people of Kosovo, UNMIK and Belgrade to be instrumental in creating the conditions for the security and freedom of movement of all communities that are necessary to ensure an increase in the return of displaced Serbs to Kosovo.

The Union reiterates the need for full respect of the border Agreement between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, signed in February 2001. It welcomes the decision of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Steiner, and the President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to set up a joint committee to deal with practical problems on the ground that might arise as a result of its

implementation. We look forward to further measures to enhance police cooperation between UNMIK and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the fight against organized crime.

We have reiterated that the main objective for the people of Kosovo is integration into the European Union. But if it is to have a European future, it must be a Kosovo with a multi-ethnic, democratic society, based on the rule of law, and with dignity and freedom of movement for all communities. We encourage the newly established provisional institutions and the community leaders to do their utmost to achieve these goals, with the assistance of UNMIK, the European Union and the international community at large.

The European Union remains committed to providing economic and political support to Kosovo. We are by far the biggest contributor to the reconstruction effort in the province, where we are providing assistance in such areas as economic, fiscal and monetary policy and management, as well as in the building of local capacity.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the progress made in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the implementation of the Framework Agreement, as well as the success of the donors' meeting, organized earlier in the month in Brussels by the European Commission and the World Bank.

The European Union firmly believes that concentrating the energies of the region on economic development, institutional reform and European integration is the best way to bring about stability and overcome conflict.

I would like to conclude by saying that we remain committed to continuing our economic assistance within the stabilization and association process, in conformity with the existing policy of conditionality, based on the achievement of European standards.

The President: I now invite Deputy Prime Minister Čović to make some additional comments.

Mr. Čović (Yugoslavia) (*spoke in Serbian. English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting today. I am very pleased that a question was asked — perhaps indirectly — today about the participation of the Povratak Coalition in the Government of Kosovo. Of course we are aware that the decision will be up to the deputies of the Povratak Coalition. They want to be real partners; they are not interested in mere window dressing. The way in which the issue of their participation was presented to the deputies of Povratak confused them; they said that they had not been consulted and had not come to an agreement in this regard.

As the Council knows, an offer was not even made to them to sign the coalition agreement on the Government of Kosovo. However, Mr. Steiner has had several talks with the deputies of Povratak and they feel that it will be necessary for them to consult further. They also believe that their unity must be preserved and that attempts should not be made to divide them. There have been some efforts to create different factions within the Coalition, in the belief that that would be the quickest way to achieve a result.

The Povratak deputies were informed about the agreement made with the Albanian leaders only after it had been signed. They were informed about the ministerial positions in the Government only after all the ministerial positions had been filled. We must try to understand their point of view, because the Serbs in Kosovo have had a very different experience from that of the Serbs who left Kosovo, and they have different opinions. I want to be very clear that neither Belgrade nor I have ever planned to block the participation of the Serbian deputies in the Government of Kosovo. Their participation is blocked by the situation in Kosovo.

It is important to recall that there are three times as many Kosovo Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro — internally displaced persons and refugees — than in Kosovo itself. I say this in support of my statement that they hold different views than those who remained in Kosovo.

In order to help the Serbs to survive in Kosovo within a truly multi-ethnic society, it is absolutely essential that we make substantive progress on returns. I have heard and fully recognize the arguments made by Assistant Secretary-General Annabi and am prepared, upon my return to Belgrade, to consult with the representatives of Povratak in order to have them further clarify their position. The final decision, however, will be up to them.

Nevertheless, given their genuine concerns, I note that it will be necessary in exchange to provide them with specific assurances that all will be done to

improve the process of the return of Serbs and non-Albanians to their homes in Kosovo. We must not allow security issues to dominate the return process or to be used to discourage potential returnees. The Belgrade authorities are fully prepared to provide the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and KFOR with all the assistance necessary to resolve these issues and to improve the return process.

Finally, the representatives of Povratak are grateful for the offered position of Minister of Agriculture. However, they asked me to convey their message to the Council that this portfolio has no importance whatsoever to the future and survival of the Serbs in Kosovo. I therefore request the Council's assistance and support in doing our very best, jointly, to encourage them to enter the Kosovo Government. We cannot succeed in this unless we cooperate very closely in this regard. We are at the Council's disposal and I wish to assure members that we will do our utmost, without exerting undue pressure.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4499

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4499th meeting

Thursday, 28 March 2002, 11.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kolby	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Lau
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Angola

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-30787 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the communiqué issued by the Government of Angola on 13 March 2002 (S/2002/270) as a positive, constructive and forward-looking approach to ending the conflict and resuming the process of national reconciliation and calls upon the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to show that it shares a similar position, with the aim of achieving national reconciliation including through a general ceasefire in Angola.

"The Security Council urges UNITA to recognize the historic nature of this opportunity to end the conflict with dignity, to give a clear, positive response to the Government's offer of peace, to implement fully the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex), including by disavowing the use of arms and demilitarizing completely, and to re-enter political life to pursue its ideals as an important contributor to the process of national reconciliation towards a fully democratic Angola.

"The Security Council recognizes the positive initiatives of the Government of Angola in this process. It also recognizes the vital role to be played by a peaceful UNITA and stresses the importance of the role of other political parties and civil society, including the churches, all supported by the international community.

"The Security Council expects that the Government of Angola will fulfil its commitments as rapidly as circumstances permit, and notes that the response of the international community, including the provision of assistance, with the exception of humanitarian assistance, would be positively encouraged by the Government's efforts and actions.

"The Security Council calls on the Government of Angola to ensure further the transparency and credibility of the peace process, including by cooperating with the United Nations, in the first phase and beyond. The Council looks forward to discussions between the Under-Secretary-General/Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa and the Government of Angola to clarify the role of the United Nations.

"The Security Council stresses the active role that the United Nations is expected to play in the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, in close cooperation with the Government of Angola, and notes the need to renew, and possibly redefine, the mandate of the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA) by 15 April 2002, taking into account recent developments in Angola, in consultation with the Government of Angola.

"The Security Council declares its support for the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and its willingness to work with all parties in this endeavour, and stresses the importance of the re-commencement of the Joint Commission as soon as UNITA is ready to name its members. It calls upon the Government to facilitate UNITA retaking its place on the Commission, while noting that it might be necessary for the parties to build upon the Lusaka Protocol, by common agreement, as appropriate to current circumstances without altering the fundamental nature and principles of the accord.

"The Security Council stands ready to consider appropriate and specific exemptions from and amendments to the measures imposed by paragraph 4 (a) of its resolution 1127 (1997) of 28 August 1997 in consultation with the Government of Angola and with a view to facilitating the peace negotiations.

"The Security Council welcomes the statement of the Government of Angola on facilitation of the political reorganization of UNITA and the choice of their leadership in complete freedom, in order to have a legitimate interlocutor for national reconciliation.

"The Security Council underlines that the legitimacy of the peace process depends upon a genuine role for, and full participation of, political parties and civil society without interference, as well as flexibility in approaching questions of national reconciliation.

"The Security Council expresses its concern that the grave humanitarian situation, especially for internally displaced persons, continues to deteriorate, and calls upon the Government of Angola to accelerate full and immediate access to all those in need of humanitarian assistance. It welcomes the decision by the Government of Angola to include humanitarian assistance in its plans to extend territorial administration throughout Angola, and expects the Government of Angola to cooperate fully, through an agreed coordinating mechanism, with the international donors in developing swiftly an appropriate and effective humanitarian response, including demining activities.

"The Security Council invites the Government of Angola to brief the Council at the earliest opportunity on the peace process in all its aspects, as well as national reconciliation and the humanitarian situation."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/7.

The Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.